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THE TIMES

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Leaked letter on budget for schools
forecast effect of funding squeeze

'Jobs will go' warning by Shephard

By John O'Leary and Ben Preston

THOUSANDS of teaching posts will disappear and class sizes will 'shoot up' if teachers receive their expected pay rise, Gillian Shephard warned Cabinet colleagues in a leaked letter published today.

The Education Secretary's comments, made in the run-up to last November's public spending settlement, succeeded in wringing from the Treasury another £133 million for education. But the 1.1 per cent increase is well below the inflation rate and falls far short of the money needed to fund the pay rise she considered necessary. The result will inevitably be substantial job losses and bigger classes.

The letter, published in today's edition of *The Times Educational Supplement*, looked forward to a 'period of calm' in classrooms after the ending of test boycotts. 'All this will now be in immediate danger if we now offer teachers either a progressively less settlement or acceptable pay levels only at the cost of sharp increases in class sizes.'

Mrs Shephard has since instructed the School Teachers' Review Body to 'have regard to affordability' in recommending any increase for the coming year. However, as the Education Secretary predicted in the leaked letter, the board is expected to recommend an increase of 2.9 per cent, the rate of inflation, when it reports within weeks.

She was writing to David Hunt, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, in his capacity as chairman of the Cabinet committee dealing with education spending. She forecast that up to 10,000 teaching posts would be lost if the 0.3 per cent budget increase on offer at the time was combined with an inflation-linked pay rise for teachers.

On that basis, the eventual 1.1 per cent increase would still imply the loss of several thousand jobs and a consequent rise in class sizes at a time when there are an extra 120,000 pupils. Mrs Shephard



Shephard: succeeded in winning £133m more

told education authorities earlier this month that they faced 'tough decisions', but reminded councillors that education had been treated more favourably than other public services.

Class sizes have grown steadily over the past four years. The pupil-teacher ratio in primary schools has risen from 22.0 in 1990 to 22.7 in 1994; the increase in secondary schools was from 15.4 to 16.4. Teacher numbers have remained relatively stable despite a 4 per cent increase in the number of pupils.

Local authorities and school governors are already forecasting job losses and bigger classes. A *Times Educational Supplement* survey found only 11 authorities able to afford a pay rise in line with inflation, with many expecting schools to find the money to increase teachers' pay.

In the leaked letter, Mrs Shephard raised the possibility of rejecting the review body's recommendations, but said that would be provocative. 'I cannot emphasise too strongly the importance of not seeming to single teachers out for harsh treatment.'

David Blunkett, Shadow Education Secretary, said: 'Gillian Shephard has clearly admitted that the Government is going to force up class sizes as a result of the cuts it has imposed on schools. We have

been saying this since the Budget, and we now have clear confirmation from the pen of the Secretary of State herself.'

The Education Department refused to comment on the letter. A spokesman said that Mrs Shephard regarded education authority budgets as 'manageable'.

The Association of County Councils said that the figures in the leaked letter underestimated the scale of the budget squeeze facing councillors. David Whitbread, the association's under-secretary for education, said Whitehall formulas ignored the fact that most councils already spent almost 4 per cent more than the Government allowed.

Mr Whitbread said: 'Mrs Shephard is shown to be speaking with two voices: sharing people's concern for increasing class sizes when talking to the Treasury, but saying to maintain the line in public that class sizes do not matter and are not linked to standards.'

Don Foster, the Liberal Democrat education spokesman, said his analysis of official figures obtained in a parliamentary written answer showed that local education authorities faced a £50 (or 2.5 per cent) spending cut for each primary pupil. Each secondary pupil risked a reduction of £194 (6.9 per cent).

Mr Foster, whose calculations were based upon changes in the standard spending assessment of each education authority, said that the worst-affected areas would be Sutton (9.4 per cent cut), Solihull (8.7), Wigan (8.5) and Barking (7.9).

He said: 'Local education authorities are being asked to do more and more for their pupils with less and less money. No wonder class sizes are rising, repairs are not being carried out and more and more town halls fear that teachers' jobs will have to be axed.'



Claire Hood, 15, whose body was found in woodland close to her Cardiff home

Girl, aged 15, is murdered taking short cut to school

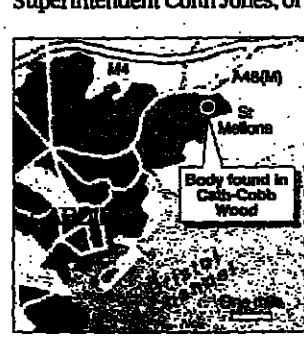
By Kathryn Knight and Simon de Brunelles

The partially clothed body of a 15-year-old girl was found in woods yesterday after she went missing while walking to school.

Detectives believe Claire Hood may have been attacked while taking a short cut through Cathod Woods near the St Mellons housing estate on the outskirts of Cardiff. She failed to arrive back at Rumney high school after going home for lunch on Wednesday.

A 13-year-old girl from the same school escaped after a man hit her over the head with a piece of wood while she was walking home on the same afternoon. Although detectives say there is no evidence the two assaults are linked they have placed the girl under

police protection. Claire's body was found by a 14-year-old boy out cycling yesterday morning near a path through the woods. Friends said last night that although she would have walked past the woods on her way to school, she never ventured in. Detective Superintendent Colin Jones, of



the South Wales serious crime squad, who is heading the murder inquiry, said: 'Someone has ended this girl's young life before it has ever properly started.'

There is no evidence that Claire was sexually assaulted before she died. Robert Gullis, Claire's headmaster, said last night: 'We are sending a letter to all parents advising them to make sure their children take extra care. They should walk in groups and raise the alarm as soon as possible if they see anything untoward. We are obviously very distressed.'

The schoolgirl who escaped described her attacker as white, in his late twenties or early thirties, and approximately 5ft 7in tall.

Russians take Grozny palace but fighting continues

FROM ANATOL LIEVEN IN ASSINOVSKAYA

RUSSIAN troops captured the Presidential Palace in the centre of Grozny yesterday. The Chechen Government admitted that its forces had abandoned the building after it was reduced to rubble by bombing.

But Aslan Maskhadov, the Chechen Commander-in-Chief, said that the loss of the palace was of no military significance. Chechen troops would continue their fight in the rest of the capital.

Colonel Maskhadov looked tired and grim at a press conference in Nazran, capital of the neighbouring republic of Ingushetia, after unsuccessful talks in Moscow with the Russian Government aimed at arranging a ceasefire. 'We don't say that we want to defeat the Russian army; that would be stupid. It only remains to die honourably for our country,' he said.

Throughout the day, Russian artillery and jets pounded the centre of Grozny around the palace and the southern approaches to the city, as well as villages and roads in the Caucasus. Colonel Maskhadov said that the palace had been abandoned after 'special Russian bombs' with time-delay fuses had damaged the bunker beneath it, making it useless as a headquarters.

The Chechen HQ had been moved half a mile to a site in the Chechen-held eastern half of the city. 'I as a soldier see no change in our position and our duty,' he said. 'Our high command continues to exist. Our volunteers are at their places and are ready to fight on harder than ever. If they think they can insult and enslave the Chechen people, this fighting will go on for years.'

The Chechens now hold only one small salient near the railway station west of the Sunzha, the river running through Grozny. The loss of the palace might lead to the Chechen defences crumbling, a successful Russian push across the Sunzha, and the rapid capture of the rest of the city. The Russian generals, having achieved something they can present to their public as a victory, may now be prepared to reopen political negotiations with the Chechens.

Echoing previous statements by Dzhokhar Dudayev, the Chechen leader, however, Colonel Maskhadov and his colleagues on the Chechen delegation accused the Russian military of destroying a ceasefire agreement already worked out in Moscow. Colonel Maskhadov said that on Wednesday evening he spoke

to General Ivan Babichev by radio and said he was ready to meet to end the fighting. General Babichev allegedly said that the only conditions Russia would accept would be the surrender of the Presidential Palace and all its garrison.

Colonel Maskhadov said the general later insisted on total Chechen capitulation. Colonel Maskhadov said: 'I took this as an insult, and I told him that I would not behave like a coward and nor would my men. I said that I could not agree to his conditions, and bade him goodbye.'

Fighting continued around Assinovskaya village near the western Chechen border with Ingushetia, where Russian forces appeared to be stalled. If they are, there will be little to stop Chechen fighters from leaving Grozny to begin a guerrilla campaign.

Mortgage rates rise

The Halifax building society, biggest in the country, yesterday said it would raise its rate by 0.25 per cent to 8.25 per cent from April 1. The Nationwide and National & Provincial followed suit, by 0.3 per cent to 8.44 per cent, and by 0.36 per cent to 8.45 per cent respectively. Page 23

Ministers put out peace signals

By Philip Webster, Political Editor

MINISTERS sent out fresh peace signals to the Euro-rebels last night, despite their rebellion on fishing and publication of a policy agenda that made them look even more like a party within a party.

In a move that caused surprise among loyalist backbenchers, senior cabinet ministers appeared ready to turn a blind eye to the latest revolt as John Major launched a fresh effort to unite his party behind his European policy and his approach to next year's conference on the future of the European Union.

Ministers said the fresh rebellion had not changed the Government's wish to bring an early end to the breach. They said it was accepted that the rebels had strong views on European issues and that Wednesday night's withdrawal of support from the Government did not amount to 're-offending while on bail'.

That approach was mirrored by other cabinet ministers who appeared to suggest that if the rebels contained their acts of rebellion to European matters, and did not widen their misdeeds, they might soon be able to

earn their passage back. Jonathan Aitken, the Euro-sceptic Treasury Chief Secretary, took a conciliatory line. He denied that the policy paper was a snub to Mr Major and said there were no grounds for saying that it made it impossible for them to return to the fold. They had long held independent views on Europe. Mr Major also took a relaxed line, refusing opportunities in the Commons to condemn the rebels' behaviour.

Some ministers expressed strong criticism of the rebel policy statement, though. John Gummer, Environment Secretary, said: 'No government can operate in the United Kingdom without having sensible views toward Europe, but the Conservative Party has a very small number who don't want that sensible view.'

It appeared that the Prime Minister and his colleagues had decided against doing anything to upset the new, but still fragile, mood of harmony. Continued on page 2, col 3

Sixes and sevens, and Peter Riddell, page 9
Leading article, and Letters, page 19

THE TIMES

30p ON SATURDAY



In *The Times* new motoring section tomorrow, your chance to win a different car to drive each month for a year — and a money-saving car hire offer for all readers

PLUS

- David Coulthard's other car
- Testing the top ten bestsellers
- Return of the super(fast)car
- The good used-car guide

Quiet despair in Kobe's rubble

FROM PEREGRINE HODSON IN KOBE

THE stillness is unnerving. In the warm refuge of Kobe's city hall, hundreds of people wrapped in blankets sleep or stare into space. Their faces are blank; the chaos of the past few days has drained them of emotion. Now they must rebuild their lives, and it will not be easy.

The seismic explosion that detonated under their city has thrown them into a strange new world, where their homes are smoking heaps of rubble and their friends and relatives are dead.

I found cycling through Kobe a bizarre experience. In Chinatown, stone lions have been toppled from their pedestals, mechanical excavators tear like hungry monsters at the remains of a collapsed motorway. Fragments of glass rest like frost in the bowers of a window-box. Overhead, helicopters relentlessly thrud-thud across the sky so that film crews can capture the devastation.

At the Red Cross hospital, the injured are brought in — 60 on Wednesday, 85 yesterday. Between operations, a doctor spares a moment to talk. The situation is critical,

he says. Often, by the time ambulances reach the injured after navigating streets blocked by shattered buildings and tangled with telephone wires, it is too late. Those with head or chest injuries have little chance of survival. Several hospitals are so severely damaged that they cannot accept patients. Those that remain operational must struggle with limited water supplies.

The doctor fears for his nurses and ambulance drivers. They have managed to keep going with almost no sleep, but now their strength is fading fast and they need relief staff desperately.

Some way down the road, a long queue waits patiently to buy food at one of the few shops open. Some people have waited an hour or more. They feel bewildered and resentful. One man is angry about the Government's slow response to the disaster. 'They're doing nothing. We don't have water — we're running out of food. Where are they? We need help.'

Three days after the earthquake, it is unclear how much. Continued on page 14, col 8

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THE OBSERVER, Sept. 18, 1994

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THE SUNDAY TIMES, Sept. 18, 1994



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Establishment 'has failed British film industry'

BY ALEXANDRA FREAN, MEDIA CORRESPONDENT



Attenborough: said that self-confidence needed

LORD ATTENBOROUGH accused the political and financial Establishment yesterday of failing to recognise the cinema as a serious art form.

In a spirited hearing, the celebrated film director and actor told the Commons Select Committee on National Heritage that the key to reviving the British film industry lay in instilling the Government and film-makers with a positive attitude. "The most important thing is that everybody has confidence," he said, adding that "the manner in which the cinema is viewed by the Establishment and vast numbers of people" was not conducive to self-belief.

"The Establishment do not consider [cinema] has any artistic merit whatsoever and that is one of the problems that we face," he said.

Young film-makers had been indoctrinated to aim low, he said, because their horizons had been stunted by the limited funding available and because cinemas no longer showed B-films on which they could learn their craft.

Today's film-makers had grown up in a climate in which television companies had become the main financiers of British films and budgets were therefore small. "We have dissuaded our creators — the writers — from even contemplating generating something of real cinematic scale because their chances of getting them backed are one in a million," he told MPs.

Describing himself as a "permanent optimist" who had been in the business of 55 years, Lord Attenborough said he believed that indigenous film-makers had

the potential to turn Britain into the Hollywood of Europe.

He proposed a levy on blank video tapes and tax concessions for foreign actors filming here, to boost investment in British films.

"If you talk to people like Jack Nicholson, they say I'm not going to the UK because my tax people tell me they have all sorts of problems there," he said, adding that this could be remedied at relatively little cost by allowing film-makers to pay foreign film stars gross of tax. Lord Attenborough said that a new system of capital allowances, which would allow film-makers to write-off 100 per cent of their investment against corporation tax within one year, might also help the industry.

He emphasised, however, that he was not coming to the Government with a "begging bowl". Big

film distributors, such as Rank, needed to invest more to help develop large-scale, integrated production houses. Big American studios could afford to churn out hundreds of films a year because they used the profits of their hits to offset the losses of the flops.

The committee also heard evidence from the BBC and from Michael Grade, chief executive of Channel 4. Mr Grade told MPs that Channel 4, the single biggest funder of feature films in the UK, expected to make a return of at least £4 million on its investment of £400,000 in the hit film *Four Weddings and a Funeral*.

He added that although Channel 4 had invested £50 million in film production in the past five years, it had received only £15 million revenue. The company could afford to bear the losses because it offset them against the

television rights it automatically acquired for the films it financed.

Apart from the cultural benefits of an indigenous film industry, Mr Grade said it could provide many jobs. "There is an amazing amount of employment on the periphery of a film: never mind the employment on the production itself," he said. He complained, however, that film distribution companies were reaping profits from the cinema, but failing to invest in production.

As part of their inquiry into the future of the British film industry, members of the all-party committee have recently made fact-finding trips to Hollywood and to Ireland. Toby Jessel, the Tory MP for Twickenham, said Britain could learn from Dublin's positive attitude towards film-making as well as the tax breaks the industry benefited from in the Republic.



Grade: film industry "can create jobs"

Army office closing rank claims of

Nolan acts quickly to overhaul MPs' link to lobbyists

BY MICHAEL DYNES

AN INDEPENDENT authority with wide-ranging powers to regulate MPs' financial affairs was proposed by Lord Nolan's inquiry into standards of public life yesterday.

Rules governing the relationship between MPs and commercial lobbyists must be overhauled, and MPs should be given much more stringent guidance about what was and what was not acceptable, Lord Nolan said.

The decision to announce an overhaul so soon into the inquiry is seen as confirmation that the reputation of MPs has fallen into disrepute, and urgent action is needed to restore public confidence in Britain's representative institutions.

Lord Nolan said: "It seems plain from the evidence so far that the rules on MPs' connections with lobbyists need to be tightened up, that MPs need much better guidance on what is and what is not acceptable, and that the declaration of interests must be made in more detail." He added: "It is also reasonably clear that we need to consider in detail the possible introduction of an independent element into Parliament's current arrangements for self-regulation." But where to draw the line over MPs being paid for outside interests "is much less clear".

Giving evidence on the third day of the public hearings, Lord Callaghan of Cardiff, the former Labour Prime Minister, who was an MP for more than 40 years, said that it was now imperative for MPs to have a code of conduct governing their financial interests. MPs should declare any salaries they received for work outside Parliament and should be prohibited from acting as paid consultants unless they had a "particular professional expertise".

The situation in the Commons had "changed out of all recognition" from when he first became an MP in 1945, Lord Callaghan said. There was now "much more wooing of MPs by business", which had provided a "rich seam for lobbyists" to exploit.

Lord Callaghan provided the inquiry with a list of recommendations to reverse the deterioration in parliamentary standards, including a new code of conduct for

MPs, which should be adopted at the beginning of every new Parliament to draw the attention of new members to the importance of preserving "the dignity of the House".

MPs should be required to declare "all contracts, agreements, and remuneration from outside bodies", prohibited from "representing company interests to ministers", and the use of Commons facilities by lobbying firms "should be curtailed".

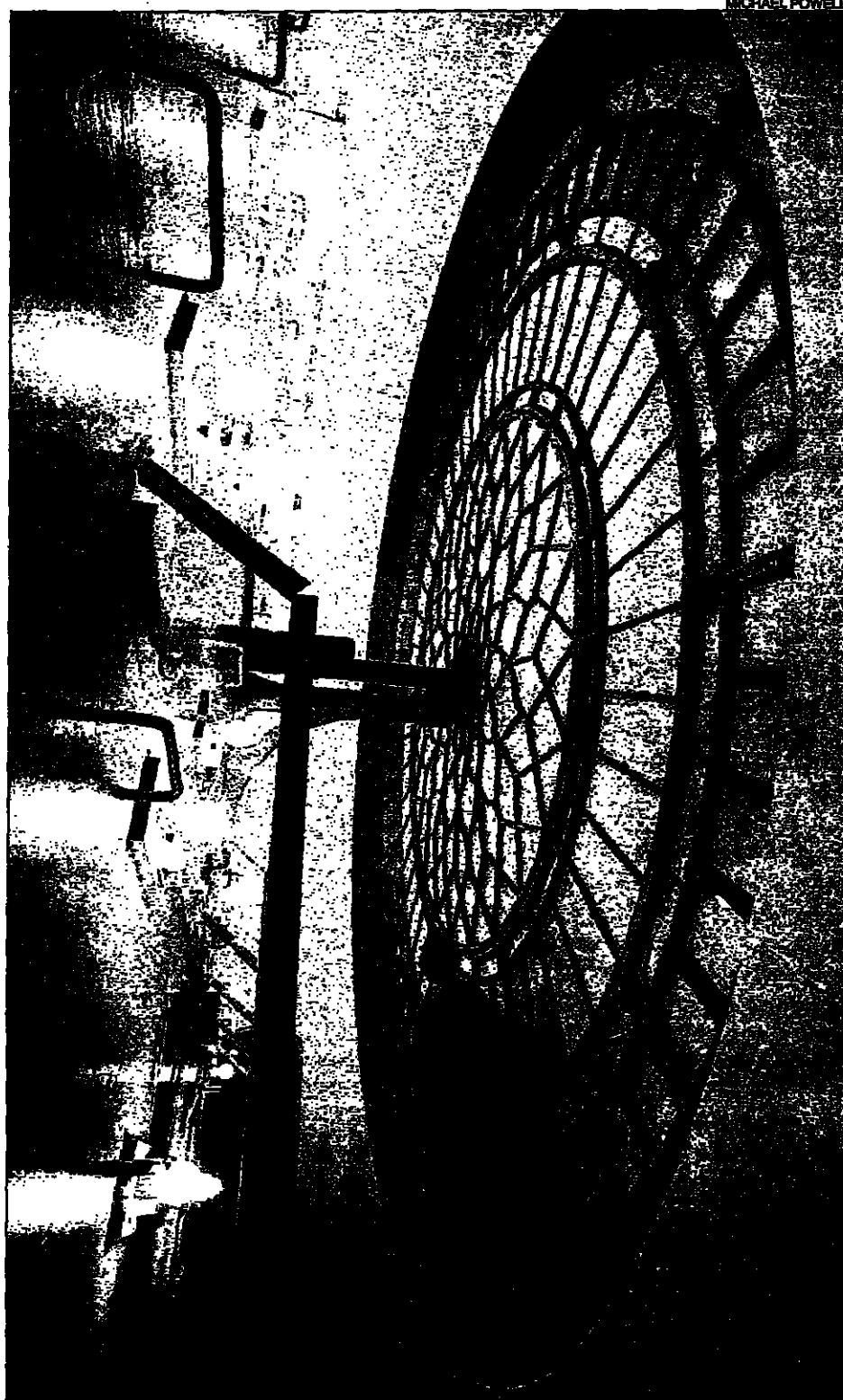
In addition, the Commons privileges committee should be restored to its former status, it should be made up of senior members of the Commons, an independent element should be added to it, and "and it should not be hesitant in using its disciplinary powers".

"The sense of dignity of the House, and the honour of being a member" must be instilled into new members, Lord Callaghan said. This had become all the more important with the change in values of society. "New members come in imbued with the doctrine of the market place, and the idea of making a profit margin on everything you do," he added.

Chris Moncrieff, the former political editor of the Press Association, who worked as a Westminster correspondent for 33 years, told the inquiry that the lobbying industry had increased "massively" over the past few years. "There is far more lunching and dining involving professional lobbyists and MPs now," he said. "What astounds me is the naivety, you could even say downright stupidity, of MPs handling lobbyists."

Nigel Forman, Conservative MP for Carlisle and Wallington, told the inquiry that MPs should be banned from acting as advocates for outside interests, and as paid directors or employees of lobbying companies. However, MPs should be free to act as paid or unpaid advisors to outside interests, he added.

The inquiry continues next Tuesday. John MacGregor, former Transport Secretary, Andrew Gifford, of the Association of Professional Political Consultants, Peter Preston, Editor in Chief of *The Guardian* and *The Observer*, and Tony Benn, MP for Chesterfield, will give evidence.



Stan Hayley, a technical support foreman at the Palace of Westminster, checks the new low-energy bulbs illuminating the faces of the Big Ben clock before they were used for the first time last night

Ministers' peace signals

Continued from page 1 among Tory MPs. They appeared to recognise that they have little option but to try to recreate their parliamentary majority.

Wednesday's vote again emphasised the Government's vulnerability. Without the votes of Ulster Unionists, it would have lost. Although not all the rebels may want to come back quickly, the Government needs to bring some of them back on board as soon as it decently can.

The desire for a unified approach is underlined by a letter in *The Times* today signed by senior backbenchers from across the party spectrum. The signatories, headed by Tom King, the

former cabinet minister, include Sir Peter Horden, David Howell, chairman of the foreign affairs select committee, and right-wing members of the 1922 executive such as Bob Dunn, David Evans and Jim Pawsey.

The letter, which is also clearly intended to be a rebuff to the views of the nine Euro-rebels, backs the negotiating position recently set out by Mr Major, adding that "the vast majority of Conservatives support a clear-headed approach to securing what is in Britain's best interests".

Earlier it had seemed that Mr Major's hopes of an early end to the rift took a blow as the rebels issued their own manifesto only 12 hours after

rebellious on the vote to allow Spanish trawlers greater access to British waters.

Many rebel demands, including rejection of a European foreign and defence policy, abolition of the European Court's powers to intervene in national politics and a pledge never to join a single currency, go well beyond what the Government could accept. One of them, Tony Marlow, MP for Northampton North, said: "Unless the Conservative Party gets its policies right on Europe, the Government will not be re-elected."

Sixes and sevens, and Peter Riddell, page 9
Leading article, and Letters, page 19

Doctors say NHS damaged by private practice

BY JEREMY LAURANCE
HEALTH SERVICES
CORRESPONDENT

LEADING consultants alleged yesterday that the NHS is being undermined by the growth of private practice and the introduction of the Government's market reforms.

Dr Jeremy Lee-Potter, former chairman of the British Medical Association Council, attacked the Government's handling of the NHS and called for a new consultant contract to reduce public disquiet about doctors' "moonlighting" in private practice.

Announcing that he was quitting the NHS early, Dr Lee-Potter, 60, urged doctors to reconsider their traditional allegiance to the Conservative Party. "Doctors' professional ethos is at greater threat from a Conservative than a Labour Government. Labour could correct some of the Tory Government's excesses."

Dr Lee-Potter, a retiring from his post as consultant haematologist at Poole NHS Trust, Dorset, next month. In an article to be published in the association's *News Review* next week, Dr Lee-Potter says unhappiness with the NHS changes is now so serious that "the whole service is under threat" but the Government remains wedded to the "political dogma" of markets and competition. "You see the NHS going on down the slope."

Dr Lee-Potter says that concerns over private practice have exposed the "archaic" consultant contract. "We need to renegotiate a clean straightforward contract which makes it clear where consultants are expected to be and when."

Professor Harry Keen, emeritus professor of human metabolism at Guy's Hospital in London and president of the NHS Support Federation, which is opposed to the NHS market, said surgeons had time on their hands because the shortage of resources limited the NHS work they could do so they turned to private practice. "I know that is happening. Surgeons complain if only they had the chance to tackle the waiting list they would do it."

A junior doctor told an inquiry she had to work an 84-hour week and managed to get to the theatre at lunchtime only twice in six months. Dr Valerie Dudgeon, 24, formerly a senior house officer at the Royal Alexandra Hospital in Paisley, is one of four doctors taking a test case to an industrial tribunal in Glasgow. They claim they were underpaid for their work.

Police have electric shock 'riot shields'

Police have bought electric shock "riot shields" to add to their armouries. The disclosure that several forces in England and Wales have obtained the equipment sparked alarm among MPs and civil liberties groups. David Madden, a junior Home Office Minister, admitted in a written parliamentary answer that the equipment had been obtained by senior officers, but he denied that the shields would be used in confrontations with demonstrators. The admission came nine days after a Channel Four *Dispatches* programme alleged that police were secretly testing shields with electric currents in them. At the time, the Home Office said no force had or planned to have electric shock weapons. A Home Office spokesman denied inconsistency yesterday and said that the shields were not "weapons", but "defensive instruments".

MPs criticise taxmen

Tax collectors were accused of making widespread and costly errors in assessing income tax and were told to speed up their work by the Commons Public Accounts Committee. More than half of taxpayers studied by independent auditors were assessed incorrectly, with £770 million of overcharging and undercharging costing the Treasury about £100 million. The Inland Revenue was also criticised for withholding personal allowances from 100,000 taxpayers, although inspectors already had the necessary information.

Ex-policeman sues

A former police officer is suing his chief constable over stress he allegedly suffered at work and which ruined his career. The claim for around £100,000 is believed to be the first of its kind. Paul Hatton, 41, who served 20 years with Merseyside Police, alleges that he was forced to carry out the work of four detectives. The stress caused by overwork made life intolerable, according to Mr Hatton, and he was forced to retire from the force on the ground of ill health.

Ireland ambassador

Britain has appointed a new ambassador to Ireland. Veronica Sutherland will take over in March from David Blatherwick, who is leaving Dublin to take up a new appointment in the diplomatic service. Mrs Sutherland, 55, is currently an assistant under-secretary at the Foreign Office. She has previously served as ambassador to the Ivory Coast.

Girl died in rescue effort

A teenage girl died in a vain attempt to save her three-year-old brother from a fire he is thought to have started with a lighter. Southwark Coroner's Court was told yesterday. Natasha Kearns Ogilvie, 14, and her brother Thomas Kearns were killed by smoke fumes in the blaze at their home in Kidbrooke, southeast London, in October. Their mother and three other children escaped. Verdict: accidental death.

Falklands soldiers sue

Four former Welsh Guardsmen who claim to be suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of the Falklands conflict are suing the Ministry of Defence for £200,000 each. The men are Derry Price, 33, of Aberystwyth, Gwent; Simon Skinner, 35, of Manselton, West Glamorgan; Dennis Morris, 38, of Tredegar, Gwent; and Chris Lewis, 30, of Port Talbot. Three served on the *Sir Galahad* and the fourth on *HMS Intrepid*.

Spain frees soccer fans

Seven Manchester United fans remained in custody in Barcelona after a European Cup match in November were freed a total of £2,000 and freed yesterday. The charges related to a fight over the cost of beer drunk by the fans in a hotel bar. The prosecution had demanded six months in prison and £3,250 compensation, but an out-of-court agreement was reached after a ten-minute hearing at which the seven pleaded guilty.

NHS adviser charged

Clive Froggatt, 46, of Gloucester, a doctor who helped the Government to reform the NHS by acting as adviser to the Department of Health on GP fundholding, was committed for trial on bail yesterday accused of illegally obtaining and possessing heroin. The prosecution made clear to Gloucester magistrates that the 16 charges before them were specimens of Dr Froggatt's alleged conduct during an 18-month period from early 1993.

Gatti to join RPO

The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra has appointed Daniele Gatti, the Milanese conductor, as its music director for the 1996-97 season. It was disclosed last month that Vladimir Ashkenazy had resigned the post after learning that the orchestra had been negotiating behind his back. Mr Gatti is music director of the Accademia di Santa Cecilia in Rome and principal guest conductor of the Royal Opera, Covent Garden.

Ice Age spiders found

A species of spider previously unknown to Britain has been discovered by scientists in a bog dating from the Ice Age. The black spider, known as *Gnaphosa nigerrima*, is found on the Continent and is believed to have become isolated in Britain when the island broke away from the rest of Europe 7,000 years ago. Dr Chris Felton, a Liverpool entomologist, said yesterday that a whole population had been unearthed at Wymburn Moss in Cheshire.

Coastguards praise 'textbook' rescue of 18 oilmen

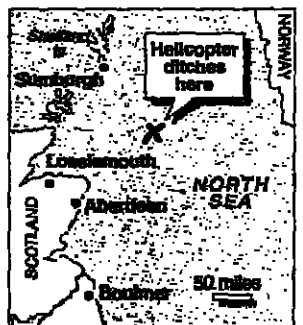
By GILLIAN BOWDITCH
SCOTLAND CORRESPONDENT

THE rescue of 18 oilmen whose helicopter ditched in the North Sea yesterday afternoon after being struck by lightning was hailed as the perfect operation yesterday.

The men, who spent an hour and a half in life rafts before they were found, were all uninjured. Six helicopters, an airplane and several ships were involved in the rescue after the Super Puma chopper made a controlled landing 150 miles from Aberdeen.

Peter Flood, of the Aberdeen coastguard, said: "Everything seemed to come together. It was a textbook rescue. It must have been very frightening for the men involved but we are all relieved that it has been so successful."

The Bristol-owned helicopter, chartered by Marathon, an American oil company,



was ten miles from the company's Brae Alpha platform in the North Sea and heading for Aberdeen with 16 oil workers and two crew when it was struck by lightning.

The pilot made a Mayday call before ditching at 12.45pm. One minute later, rescue helicopters were launched from RAF Lossiemouth, Grampian, Boulmer, Northumberland,

and from the coastguard base at Sumburgh in Shetland. A Norwegian civilian helicopter and another helicopter from the oil platform joined in the mission as did several ships in the area.

The oilmen, all of whom were wearing special immersion suits and are trained in helicopter evacuation techniques, were able to launch the helicopter's two inflatable life rafts and clamber aboard. The chopper also has push-out windows for passengers to make a fast exit, and distress beacons.

After an hour-and-a-half the men were rescued by an oil supply standby vessel, *Gramscian Freedom*. The helicopter from RAF Lossiemouth then winched 14 of the men on board to take them back to the Brae Alpha platform for medical checks. The other four opted to stay on the ship. Winds were gusting up to



A Bristol helicopter similar to the one that ditched

30mph but seas were moderate and visibility good. North Sea helicopter operators have been concerned about a number of recent lightning strikes to aircraft in the area. The Department of Transport said a seven-strong team from the Air Accidents Investigation Branch was travelling to Aberdeen.

The last major North Sea helicopter crash was in March 1992 when a Super Puma went down in severe weather off the Cormorant Alpha platform. On that occasion eleven oilmen died and six survived. The Super Puma is regarded as the most sophisticated of its kind. There are about 40 in use with British companies. It is rapidly replacing the Sikorsky S61 N as the "workhorse"

The last major North Sea

Medic... to go...

THE TIMES FRIDAY JANUARY 20 1995

Olympics official says second lieutenant enjoyed being centre of attention

Army officers deny closing ranks over claims of bullying

By RICHARD DUCE

AN ARMY officer alleged to have been involved in bullying incidents that drove a young second lieutenant to mental breakdown is a senior figure within the British Olympic movement. It emerged in the High Court yesterday. Former Lieutenant Simon Clegg, now deputy general secretary of the British Olympic Association, said the junior officer "was not bullied in any way in his time with the Army, of that I am convinced".

Alastair Green is suing the Ministry of Defence and Mr Clegg, along with nine other named officers of the 7th Royal Horse Artillery, claiming episodes of humiliating bullying ten years ago led to his mental breakdown after 19 weeks of a short-term commission.

Mr Clegg, 36, currently organising the European Youth Olympics in Bath, denied he was involved in an incident in which Mr Clegg claims he was dragged from his bedroom and stripped naked in the mess bar at Aldershot. He admitted he was present at another incident in which Mr Green, then aged 19, claims he was stripped naked and strapped to a ceremonial cannon outside the regimental mess with a rose between his buttocks.

Mr Clegg said he was sober when he arrived at the mess as Mr Green was being carried out "ceremonial fashion" from the building before being draped over the cannon. He told Mr Justice Popplewell that all the officers involved

had had a lot to drink and Mr Green appeared in no way distressed. "Mr Green revelled in being the centre of attraction. He was a popular officer. I am not trying to paint the regiment whiter than white. We enjoyed working hard and playing hard."

Another of the named officers, Nigel Bedford, now a Lieutenant Colonel, accepted his career would be finished if Mr Green's allegations were found to be true. "It would have been nothing short of catastrophic for my career if I had taken part in or witnessed this sort of thing," he said.

Lt Col Bedford, who has served in Northern Ireland, the Falklands and northern Iraq, denied Mr Green had ever been bullied. "The officers enjoy practical jokes and exchanging jokes and enjoyed boisterous fun. Mr Green entered fully into the spirit of this. He loved being in the officers' mess and enjoyed being in the company of people who enjoyed life."

"Throughout my career it has constantly been brought home to me by reports in the papers about bullying that that sort of behaviour is not tolerated in the Army, and rightly so."

Lt Col Bedford, who was a Captain and mess secretary at the time of the alleged bullying in 1985, said Mr Green had acquired the nickname "Ten Inch", not as a sarcastic reference to the size of his penis, but because other officers believed him to be a "virgin soldier".

"In the early days, we believed he was a virgin and that it would be a good idea if we helped him lose his virginity. At a particular party I believe he was given the nickname to make him more attractive to members of the opposite sex."

He said virtually everyone in the mess had a nickname. He was called "Bed-pan" and the doctor's wife "Nurse Whip".

Under cross-examination from Sydney Kentridge QC, for Mr Green, Lt Col Bedford denied he and other officers had "closed ranks" and were denying involvement in the bullying to protect themselves. Mr Green, now 29, and living in Japan where he works as an English teacher, has told the court he was stripped on another occasion after being invited to a toga party in the mess, and also that he had been the victim of a homosexual assault by an officer in his bedroom. The defence denies all the allegations except the cannon incident, in which it says Mr Green was a willing participant.

The named officers along with Mr Clegg and Lieutenant Colonel Bedford are Captains Christopher Laing (now dead), Nicholas Syrett and Marcus Berrison. Majors William Moore, John Murphy, John Buchanan and Jonathan Hull, and Lieutenant Marcus Pakenham (who has not been served with the proceedings and is not represented). The hearing continues.



Alastair Green in his days as a second lieutenant with the Royal Horse Artillery

Parker Bowles union undone in three minutes

By ALAN HAMILTON

BRIGADIER Andrew Parker Bowles and his wife Camilla were granted a decree nisi along with 31 other divorcing couples at a three-minute hearing yesterday.

The end of the 21-year marriage was enacted in a small room of bare institutional palls in Somerset House, a palace of sorrows that houses not only the High Court family division but also the Island Revenue. Neither party was present. Indeed, no one was present apart from the judge, the court clerk and ten reporters.

Outside in the cold, a lone photographer lurked, awaiting the million-to-one chance that someone recognisable would turn up. He was, naturally, disappointed. Unlike in Mrs Simpson's day, when she had to be hustled off to Ipswich in the vain hope that her hearing would pass unnoted, the legal act of divorce is painless, clinical and brief.

On the door of court 2 was pinned the day's cause list, 32 names in vaguely alphabetical order, with "Parker Bowles, C.R. v A.H." third from bottom. The order of initials showed that A.H. had allowed C.R. to petition him, rather than the other way round. The couple's joint statement last week said they were divorcing by mutual consent, but one party has to set the legal ball rolling, and the informal opinion of law-

yers yesterday was that for A.H. to let C.R. do the petitioning was the gentlemanly thing to do.

In her affidavit, which was not produced, Mrs Parker Bowles had stated that it became clear in February 1992 that her marriage had irretrievably broken down; since then her husband had spent only 90 nights in their marital home at Corsham, Wiltshire. Senior District Judge Gerald Angel entered at 10.30. Mrs Carole Barry, the court clerk, switched on a tape recorder and recited the list of 32 names.

The judge glanced briefly around his modest courtroom: "Does any party or person wish to show cause against the decrees being pronounced?" A pause, and silence. "I pronounce the decrees." The judge made an order for costs in another case, rose, and left the court. It was still only 10.33.

Now the Parker Bowleses are free to apply for a decree absolute which, assuming no one comes forward to challenge the petition, will be granted six weeks from today.

Ken Stronach, the Prince of Wales's personal valet under royal investigation over newspaper revelations, was yesterday questioned by the Prince's private secretary, Richard Aylard, about his role in the articles.

Officials 'milked' NHS of £400,000

By A STAFF REPORTER

TWO health officials and three businessmen milked nearly £400,000 from the NHS to fund a lavish lifestyle, a court was told yesterday. It was alleged that money paid for consultancy services that were never provided was spent on holidays and tickets for rugby internationals.

David Elfer, for the prosecution, said the conspiracy began after Wessex Regional Health Authority awarded a £1.7 million contract to Abbey Business Consultants for work on its computer system.

The owner of the company was Arthur Tully, described as the "brains and the man with skills to be a puppet master". Mr Elfer said Mr Tully, together with an employee, Richard Haver, and a consultant, William Beilie, hatched the scheme to inflate the contract with two officials of the authority, Hamer Norman and James Lewis.

Winchester Crown Court was told that the operation worked successfully until Mr Norman and Mr Lewis were suspended in 1991. "It was noticed that Lewis had a lot of spare cash," Mr Elfer said.

Mr Tully, 52, of Chandlers Ford, Hampshire; Mr Norman, 56, of Winchester; and Mr Beilie, 44, of Romsey, Hampshire, all deny conspiracy to defraud the health authority. Mr Lewis, 57, of Bishopstoke, Hampshire, is too ill to stand trial. Haver, 48, of Chandlers Ford, admitted conspiracy to defraud and will be sentenced at the end of the trial. The case is expected to last ten weeks.



Police officers take Ruth Neave for questioning

Murdered boy's mother arrested

By RICHARD DUCE

THE mother of Rikki Neave, the six-year-old boy found naked and strangled close to his home last November, was arrested yesterday by police investigating his murder.

Ruth Neave, 26, was being questioned last night at Thorpewood police station in Peterborough.

Police have until 7.30 to night to continue interviews with Mrs Neave before they must apply to a magistrate for permission to continue holding her in custody.

Rikki was found dead in a copse some 500 yards away from his home on the Welland estate in Peterborough on November 29. He had been strangled.

His body was found after his mother, who has three other children, reported him missing when he failed to return from school.

Rikki did not go to Welland County primary school on the day he vanished, but staff there knew him as an occasional truant and assumed that he was at home with his mother.



Rikki: school thought he was playing truant

Medieval court blocks plan to give couple a bathroom

By DOMINIC KENNEDY

THE television presenter Esther Rantzen was yesterday in dispute with a medieval foresters' court over extending a cottage she gave to a homeless family.

The New Forest Verderers, who are responsible for protecting common land, have blocked a proposal to build a bathroom onto an old gatehouse at Ms Rantzen's farm, which she has given rent-free to Elizabeth Lawrence, her children's former nanny. Mrs Lawrence, 31, her husband Dean, 34, and their two daughters were invited to move in last August when

they had to sell their house because of financial problems. Without a bathroom, they have to wash in their daughters' bedroom or walk to Ms Rantzen's weekend farmhouse.

The extension would require 18ft by 9ft of common land so Ms Rantzen and her husband, the producer Desmond Wilcox, offered half an acre of their land to the verderers in return.

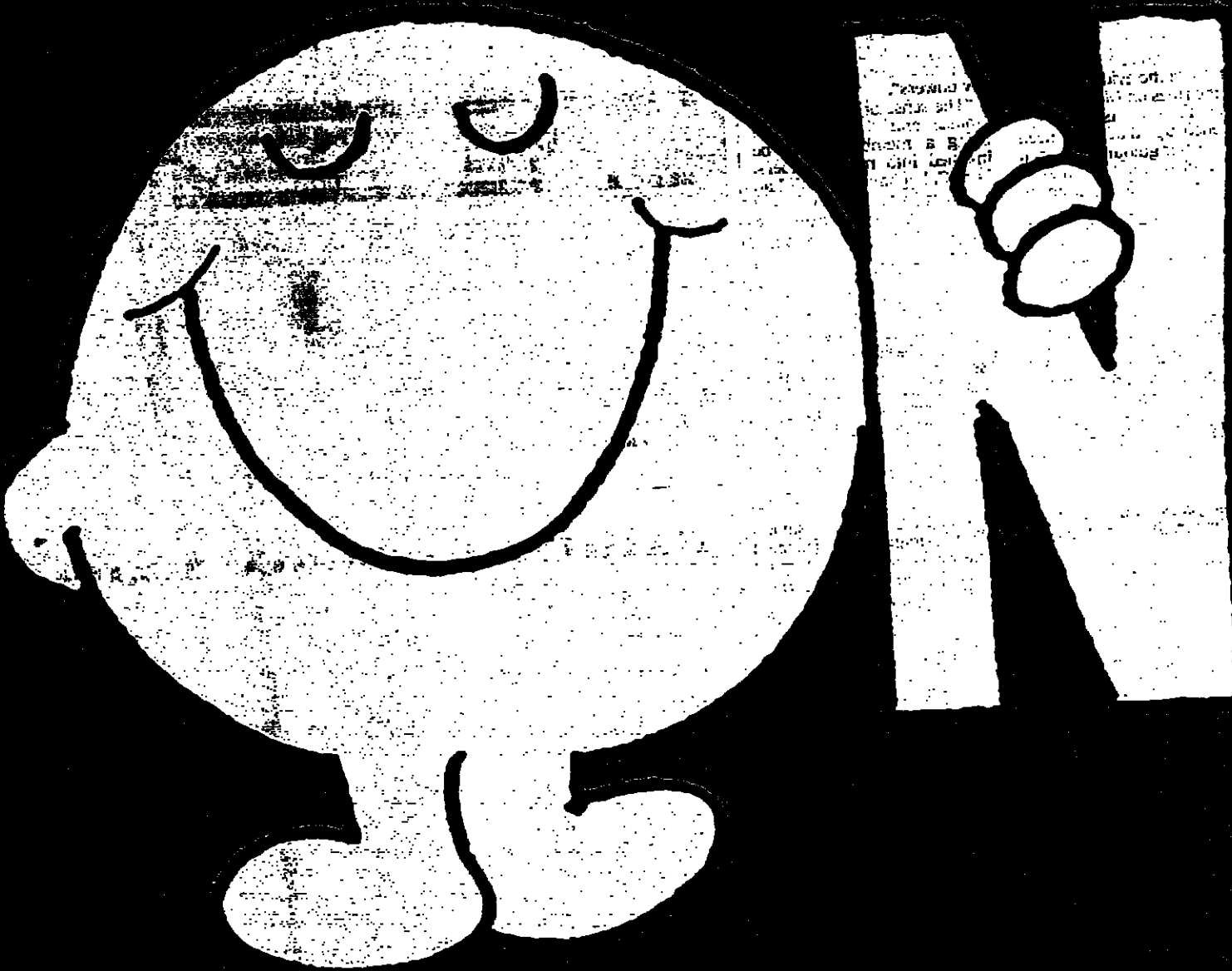
More than 100 villagers arrived at a meeting in Lyndhurst to give their opinions, only to discover the plan had already been rejected by the

verderers at a private meeting.

The chairman of Bramshaw parish council in Hampshire, Jack Sturgess, said: "This decision was made without regard to anyone. We want to keep young families about the place so the village doesn't turn into a geriatric ward."

Ms Rantzen said she was amazed by the verderers' decision. John Barry, the Official Verderer, said the common land could be swapped only for unenclosed land. The plot offered by Ms Rantzen was enclosed.

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Police warn
exporter for
crowd incite



Para wh...ed w
check... loses

Girl survives...



THE TIMES FRIDAY JANUARY 20 1995

Officers seek evidence against farmer after fresh clashes end in 21 arrests at Brightlingsea docks

Police warn sheep exporter for alleged crowd incitement

BY MICHAEL HORSNELL

THE farmer organising livestock exports from the Essex port of Brightlingsea is under investigation for alleged incitement after a fourth day of ugly confrontations between police and demonstrators which led to 21 arrests.

Richard Otley, 71, whose business has galvanised a middle-class protest against the shipment of animals to the Continent for slaughter, was allegedly seen gesturing to the crowd as 1,200 sheep were taken into the docks under police escort. The Hummingdon-based farmer was warned by an officer in riot gear after he allegedly made V-signs, blew kisses and smirked at the protesters from the first of the three articulated lorries.

Assistant Chief Constable Geoffrey Markham said: "I am of the view that Mr Otley's presence is not conducive to good order and I am taking steps in that direction. He is under observation. If he has committed offences he will be dealt with in the same way as anyone else." An appeal for photographic evidence was made.

Mr Otley, who claims influence in the Conservative Association in the Prime Minister's constituency, said: "The more confrontation I get, the more determined I am to see this through." He is president of the British Association of Sheep Exporters and was fined last year at Dover for ill-



Markham: dismayed by breakdown in relations

treating animals in transit. The £7,000 fine was reduced on appeal to £3,000.

Yesterday the sheep lorries were seen through at 7.30am by 250 police, who are staying at a holiday centre in Clacton. The formed a spearhead formation to push through about 800 demonstrators, including children and elderly people, shortly after giving loudspeaker warnings to keep clear.

The lorries made their 200-yard journey past the cordon in a stop-start exercise that took 40 minutes. Women and children were forced away from pavements where they had previously been told to retreat. Eggs were thrown at the lorries and abuse hurled at Mr Otley, who has a six-month contract to export sheep to the Continent.

An ambulance was called for a person who needed treatment for shock and other people complained of minor injuries and accused the police of brutality. The 21 people arrested included Sue Wheeler, chair of Brightlingsea Against Live Exports (BALE).

The lorries, filled with bleating sheep and smelling strongly of urine, stood in the privately owned docks for more than four hours awaiting the arrival of the Danish ship *NV Caroline*. Gales prevented it from sailing to Newport, near Ostend, on the 2pm tide and the sheep were expected to remain in the hold overnight before their nine-hour journey.

Francesca da Silva, a BALE spokesperson, said: "We failed to stop Mr Otley today but the whole town is determined this trade will stop. We will be here every day for the next six months if necessary."

Mr Markham said that the force may have to seek assistance from other forces. The operation is estimated to have cost nearly £250,000 so far. He said: "I am quite dismayed by the breakdown in relations with the local community. This is a desperate situation and I haven't got many cards to play."

Ric Morgan, the Conservative mayor, disclosed yesterday that the council has taken legal advice in an attempt to ban the exports. He said: "We hope a ban might be possible on the grounds that it is unreasonable to remove the vitality and commerce of this town through this dreadful trade."

The British Veterinary Association said yesterday that protesters were making life worse for the animals. Bob Young, the vice-president, said: "We have heard that hundreds of animals are suffering from stress-induced and stress-related diseases, such as pneumonia, as a result of their journeys being prolonged by protests."

Labour yesterday demanded an immediate ban on the export of calves for rearing abroad in veal crates, and said the Government should compensate farmers.



Marjorie Gray confronts a policeman at the docks: "This is a tyrannical penalty against a small town. I have never felt so angry"

'A tyrannical penalty against a small town'

BY MICHAEL HORSNELL

MARJORIE GRAY, an 85-year-old retired nurse with a lame leg, least heavily in protest against a 6ft 2in policeman in riot gear at the Brightlingsea dock gates, refusing to budge. The officer declined to arrest her and listened as she reprimanded him for the heavy-handedness of his colleagues.

Sheep Wars 1995 does not sit easily with the image of the Roman port

where the 7,000 law-abiding citizens normally prefer to mind their own business. Miss Gray said: "This is a tyrannical penalty against a small town which is protesting against the invasion of a horrible trade. I have never felt so angry."

Rosemary Catford, 48, said: "I no longer feel as though I am in England. It feels more as if I were in Chile or Uganda. I was proud of my police force. But now it's like a different country. They have forfeited

all goodwill." Denise Carby, 38, a mother of two, will lodge a complaint against police after an encounter with an officer whose number she took. "I was told to move back. He got his hand and just screwed it into my face until my neck was twisted to one side. These are bully-boy tactics."

Peter Watts, 49, said: "My daughter was kned in the groin and her arm bent up behind her. She is a care assistant, 21 years old. I can scarcely believe the things I see in this quiet,

peaceful town." Fred Griffin, 61, a garment technologist who made a pre-retirement move to the town six months ago, said: "There are no militants here. I was standing on the pavement and I got squashed up against the wall by the police. They just punched their way through perfectly well behaved demonstrators." His wife Carol, 50, added: "They have been so brutal. The people of Brightlingsea will never trust the police again."



Brightlingsea: 'intolerable to remove the commerce of this town through this dreadful trade'

Para who killed woman at checkpoint loses appeal

BY RICHARD FORD, HOME CORRESPONDENT

A PARATROOPER jailed for life for murdering a teenager travelling in a joyrider's car in Northern Ireland lost his appeal against conviction yesterday. A unanimous judgment by five law lords dismissed the appeal by Private Lee Clegg, 26, who is serving his sentence in Wakefield jail, West Yorkshire.

The decision is a setback to The Parachute Regiment, which has been campaigning to have the conviction reduced to manslaughter. Officers said last night that the "fight for justice" would continue.

Julian Brazier, Conservative MP for Canterbury, said the judgment would cause great worry among soldiers in Northern Ireland. "I think it is a horrifying decision. We want a pardon for Private Clegg."

Clegg, a member of 3 Battalion, was convicted at Belfast

Crown Court in 1993 of the murder of Karen Reilly, 18, from West Belfast. She died after he opened fire on a Vauxhall Astra car speeding through a checkpoint in the nationalist part of the city in September 1990.

Clegg maintained that he acted in self-defence when he opened fire, believing the car contained terrorists. In their judgment, the Law Lords said that while a person acting in self-defence or a police officer arresting an offender had a choice about the degree of force used, a soldier in Northern Ireland had "no scope for graduated force".

Lord Lloyd of Berwick said: "The only choice lay between firing a high-velocity rifle which, if aimed accurately, was almost certain to kill or injure, and doing nothing at all." There was no case in-law

for reducing the conviction to manslaughter. Such a decision was a matter for legislation.

A spokesman for The Parachute Regiment said: "We are disappointed with the decision. The regiment will give every support it can through the necessary channels to obtain the release of one of our colleagues convicted of an offence while doing his duty."

Wyn Johnson, Clegg's mother, said: "We just can't believe what has happened. We will continue fighting for him."

Mary Reilly, Karen Reilly's mother, said last night from her home on the Twinbrook estate in West Belfast: "The last four years have been like an ongoing nightmare, but I'm glad it's all over. This was a good judgment, and now he's definitely not getting out."

Girl survives transplant

BY MARIANNE DARCH

A COUPLE who raised almost £1 million for a liver transplant centre after their three-year-old daughter developed the same liver condition that killed her sister heard yesterday that she had made a full recovery after a transplant operation.

Surgeons at Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge, said that Julie Maguire, now 13, was doing well. Her parents, Peter and Margaret, said she could be out within weeks. "For the first time in 13 years we have a daughter with rosy cheeks and a new life," they said.

The Maguires launched their ten-year fund-raising drive after their first daughter, Joanne, died of cirrhosis of the liver in 1980. "In those days there were no liver transplants for children. Nothing could be done for Joanne," said Mr Maguire, 48, who works for the Ministry of Defence in Gosport. Determined to help others,



Peter and Margaret Maguire with their daughter, Julie, who is recovering from a transplant operation

they set up a charity to buy equipment for the transplant centre at Addenbrooke's. Their hopes were boosted in 1984 when Ben Hardwick became the first child to receive a liver at the hospital. Now the unit performs an average of 25 transplants a year.

Sue Falvey, the hospital's transplant co-ordinator said:

"The money raised by their charity enables us to buy new equipment that the NHS can't afford."

Mr Maguire said the campaign would go on. "The transplant unit will always need more money," he said. "We will carry on for all the parents who are going through what we have been through with Julie."

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Winning Move, page 44

THE TIMES FRIDAY JANUARY 20 1995

Car-free zones proposed to cut pollutants linked with cancer and breathing difficulties

Gummer unveils plan to improve nation's air quality

By NICK NUTTALL
ENVIRONMENT
CORRESPONDENT

CAR-FREE zones will soon be declared in Britain's cities, under a strategy to improve air quality announced by John Gummer, the Environment Secretary, yesterday.

Councils are to be required to draw up air-quality management plans detailing how they will tackle local pollution and blackspots. Mr Gummer also announced that there would be national targets to be met by 2005, for nine pollutants, including benzene and oxides of nitrogen which have been linked with cancer and breathing difficulties.

Mr Gummer has angered environmentalists by not setting limits for ozone, a pollutant linked with smog, breathing difficulties and asthma attacks. The Government claims that much of the ozone that forms over Britain is blown from the Continent, and that the European Community needs to take tougher action against it. However, Fiona Weir, of Friends of the Earth, said the omission reflected government concern that a standard for ozone



Gummer: to set no limit for ozone levels.

proposed last year by the Environment. Department's own advisers could not be met by industry and car-makers. The air-quality plans, to be drafted by 1997, are expected to advocate pedestrian-only areas, speed restrictions, and involving businesses. Tim Brown, of the National Society for Clean Air, said firms could be encouraged to restrict parking and replace company cars with free passes for public transport. The plans may also include last-resort measures to ban cars and lorries on roads where pollution is notorious, because of heavy traffic, high buildings and weather conditions. The Department of the Environment said yesterday that councils had powers under the Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984 to close roads. Officials believe that the powers could be applied at times of persistently poor air quality.

Similar powers are held by the Government to restrict traffic on trunk roads and motorways, but Mr Gummer said they would not be needed. He said the planning system would achieve reductions in fumes, by promoting schemes that reduce car travel and put offices, homes, and facilities at the hub of public transport networks.

Mr Gummer said that meanwhile air quality was being improved by stricter emissions tests and the introduction of catalytic converters on vehicles. Steven Norris, the junior transport minister, said: "We believe that by 2005 we will see carbon monoxide levels falling by 65 per cent, volatile organic compounds including benzene falling by 86 per cent and



By 2005, carbon monoxide levels on roads are predicted to fall 65 per cent and benzene levels by 86 per cent

oxide of nitrogen by 66 per cent."

Mr Gummer said councils would be given computer links to government monitoring stations so they could issue more accurate pollution alerts.

New legislation will be needed for some of the strategy including local authority air-quality management plans. Mr Brown said it was needed urgently if the 2005 targets were to be met. The Department of Trade

and Industry's deregulation unit and the Treasury have been worried that new powers for councils could increase red tape for business. Their delaying tactics have made it difficult for Mr Gummer to find a slot for the necessary legislation. But the Environment Secretary is expected to score a political victory over trade and industry officials by endorsing an amendment backed by the National Society for Clean Air to the Environmental Agency

Bill. The amendment, which would bring in air-quality laws is currently before the House of Lords. Mr Gummer said yesterday that he welcomed the specific air-quality initiatives proposed by London councils under a separate Bill before Parliament, for the capital. It contains provisions for council staff to test and issue fines for polluting vehicles.

Some clean-air campaigners, local councils and health

groups welcomed the announcement of the national strategy. But the Association of London Authorities said that it would require additional funding to be effective. Westminster council installed the first kerbside monitor for vehicle exhaust soot particles in Oxford Street last month and it is undergoing trials. The council uses a laser to monitor background pollution and is shortly to issue daily predictions of levels.

Solicitor 'banker' in mortgage swindle

A CROOKED solicitor acted as the "banker" in a multi-million-pound mortgage fraud involving scores of properties across southern England, a court was told yesterday. Some of the illegally raised cash was used to help to develop a museum dedicated to Sherlock Holmes.

Much of the four-year swindle was carried out in the late 1980s, at the height of the property boom. Since then at least £7 million of the fraudsters' gains had disappeared without trace.

Charles Miskin, for the prosecution, told the sentencing hearing at Wood Green Crown Court, north London, that one objective was to create a string of properties to rent out. David Sachs, 50, of Stowmarket, Suffolk, who used to run a sole practice in Kensington, played a leading role in the swindle, which involved bogus identities, multiple applications on the same property and fictional references. Sachs has admitted two counts of plotting to defraud.

In the dock with Sachs was John Aldin, 37, of Belgrave, London, convicted of obtaining £1.2 million by deception. Also before the court were William Eaglen, 46, another solicitor, convicted of plotting to defraud, and John Skok, 35, and Liam Leroy, 36, who both admitted similar counts. The hearing continues.

'League table' for fertility clinics

By JEREMY LAURANCE

SUCCESS rates for fertility clinics are to be published after pressure from patients' groups worried that some centres were concealing their figures.

The decision has been taken by the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority. Success rates among the 116 clinics that it has licensed vary from 4 per cent live births per cycle of treatment to more than 21 per cent. A cycle of treatment typically costs £2,000-£2,500. Most patients have more than one attempt and some require a dozen or more.

Yesterday the authority issued a consultation paper on how the information is to be published to ensure it is clear to patients and fair to clinics. Some clinics take older patients or those with more difficult problems, so the authority proposes an adjusted rate. The first success rates, for treatment in 1993, will be published next summer. Ruth Deech, the newly appointed chairwoman of the authority, said: "The information is there and it seems wrong not to publish it."

The overall success rate of clinics rose from 8.6 per cent live births per cycle of treatment in 1985 to 13.8 per cent in 1991 but dipped in 1992 to 12.7 per cent. The natural rate of conception is 20 per cent per cycle.

Switch-on at first solar power office block

By PAUL WILKINSON

BRITAIN'S only solar-powered office block was formally switched on yesterday, with computers, lifts, lights and fans powered by energy generated from 450 panels mounted on its outside walls.

Only on particularly dull days will the National Grid help out at the University of Northumbria's computer centre in Newcastle upon Tyne. Its creators expect that during the summer vacation the system will produce more power than required and the surplus can be fed into the rest of the campus.

The £15 million solar retrofit of the 1960s Northumberland Building is the high point in 20 years' work by Professor Bob Hill, 57, head of the university's photo-voltaics applications centre. Yesterday he predicted that by 2020 solar-powered buildings would be common.

Prof Hill believes that by setting up such a system in a region not noted for its sunshine, he will silence critics who claim solar power can never be successful in Britain's climate. "We know that it will work but proving it is another thing," he said.

Prof Hill said that as the cost of solar cells dropped their use would increase, making them affordable to all companies by the start of the next century.

Storms drive up price of fish

By ROBIN BARNWELL

A WEEK of storms is putting pressure on fish prices. Fresh cod and haddock are selling from £3.20 to £3.40 a lb for large fillets and whiting from £1 to £1.80 a lb. Brill is available from around £3 a lb and Dover sole £5 a lb. Native oysters, however, are well priced at around 50p a shell.

Vegetable bargains include Spanish onions at 35p to 45p a lb; English Brussels sprouts at 20p to 40p a lb; and French golden delicious apples at 35p to 52p a lb.

Advised best buys include:

Asda: Fresh turkey breast steaks £1.79 a lb; English red-dessert apples 65p a 2lb pack; braising steak £1.75 a lb; 800g granary loaf 55p. Budget: Fresh chicken legs £1.69 a 2lb 4oz pack; vanilla dairy ice cream 69p a litre; 400g low fat sausages 99p. Co-op: 600g Kellogg's Rice Krispies £1.69; 680g Pommies Noisettes 57p; fresh minced beef 99p a lb; 200g low fat soft cheese 59p. Harrods: 100g Serrano ham £2.95; Cabot cheese £2.50 each; heart-shaped mousse de la mer £6.65 each; salmon tartare £5.20 each. Iceland: 20 beefburgers £3.29; pepperoni pizza £1.49; 30 cod

bites 99p; mandarin cheese cake £1.49. Marks and Spencer: Boiled British gammon £5.99 a lb; 600g fresh fruit salad £1.99; 240 extra strong tea bags £2.99; 10 crumpets 42p; chicken breast plate pie £2.65. Sainsbury: 454g lean mince beef £1.78; 454g Cumberland sausage 74p; red and white Bulgarian country wine £2.09. Sainsbury: 400g wafer thin turkey and ham £1.49; 200ml half fat crème fraîche 59p; 1kg

broccoli £1.49; 3 250ml orange/apple fruit juices 79p; 1kg porridge oats 55p. Somerfield: Fresh pork loin chops £1.09 a lb; 500g prepacked tomatoes 55p; 295g Heinz weightwatchers' beef lasagne 99p; 400g shortcake biscuits 34p. Tesco: White seedless grapes £1.49 a lb; 454g Lincolnshire sausages 99p; 1kg pack of cooking onions 59p; stewing steak £1.68 a lb. Waitrose: Scotch beef diced braising steak £2.69 a lb; three British pork loin steaks £1.69; 250g dwarf corn £1.49; trout fillets £3.59 a lb.

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THE TIMES FRIDAY JANUARY 20 1995

Indecision remains over Britain's role in the EU

Tory rebels in disarray after manifesto launch

By Jill Sherman
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

EIGHT of the whipless Tory Euro-rebels launched a manifesto yesterday aimed at reshaping the party's agenda on Europe, but they were split over the best way forward.

The rebels, who are demanding a removal of power from Brussels, said that the Tories would lose the next general election unless they changed tack on Europe.

The proposals include disbanding the European Parliament, rejecting monetary union, restricting the powers of the European Union and abolishing the common fisheries policy and common agricultural policy.

Although the objectives appear entirely at odds with membership of the European Union, the rebels were split over whether they wanted Britain to pull out altogether. Many of the rebels also felt that the public should be consulted over Europe but the group was divided on

WHAT THE DOCUMENT SAYS

- Scrap the principle of economic and monetary union and allow each nation to manage its own economic policies
- Replace the European Parliament with a European Assembly of MPs nominated by national parliaments
- Stop European Union treaties covering foreign affairs and defence
- End the right of the European Court to intervene in national policies
- Curtail the EU budget and end all interventionist subsidies
- Tackle the Common Agricultural Policy by restoring responsibility for agriculture to national governments
- Replace the Common Fisheries Policy with a similar shift of responsibility to member states
- Allow member states to ban export of live animals

whether a referendum should be held.

The MPs vehemently denied that they wished to bring down the Government despite having voted against it on fishing policy 12 hours earlier. They were not trying to "bash" the Government, merely to offer suggestions for improvement, the MPs said. But they also made clear that they were in no hurry to have the whip restored.

Tony Marlow said: "Unless the Conservative Party gets its policies right on Europe, the

Conservative Government will not be re-elected at the next general election. Our aim, our objective is to see a Conservative victory at the next election."

Eight of the nine whipless rebels signed up to the 1,000-word manifesto: Teresa Gorman, Sir Richard Body, Christopher Gill, Richard Shepherd, Sir Teddy Taylor, John Wilkinson, Tony Marlow and Nicholas Budgen.

Michael Cardis, the remaining whipless MP, did not take part in yesterday's event

and has not attended any of the rebels' recent meetings. Nicholas Budgen was a reluctant participant.

On Wednesday Mr Budgen signalled that he would not attend the press conference but he changed his mind after deciding he wanted to put his views across. Some of the rebels are privately concerned that their colleagues may want to go too far in trying to loosen ties with Europe.

The manifesto argues that the aim of the negotiations for the 1996 inter-governmental conference should be to seek "substantial repatriation of decision making". If this proved impossible "our aim should be to seek a separate relationship with the EU, possibly on the basis of free trade and friendship only". The MPs add: "We should also make it clear that the UK will in no circumstances agree to further EU funding until progress is made."

The rebels claimed the support of most Tory MPs, party members and the public. John



Wilkinson said: "We believe we represent the majority of the people of this country. We have been overwhelmed by the expressions of support which we have received."

Mr Marlow said that there was no democratic consent for the Government's present stance on Europe. "We are out of touch with people. The tide

of European federalism has got to go back."

Sir Teddy Taylor insisted that the rebels were not a party within a party and denied that they thought the European issue was more important than maintaining a Tory Government.

Robin Cook, the Shadow Foreign Secretary, also ex-

ploited their action. "John Major will never command the respect of the country when he is treated with contempt by Conservative MPs," he said. "He offered his rebels an olive branch and today they snapped it in two."

The rebels were immediately criticised by John Gummer, the Environment Secretary. He accused them of trying to undermine British efforts to win a better deal in Europe.

Leading article and Letters, page 19

Lack of candour blurs fantastic view of Europe

The Tory Euro-rebels are trying to have the best of both worlds — and they are getting away with it. They want to engage in the Tory party debate over European policy and have the freedom to rebel. Only hours after seven of the nine MPs without the whip voted against the Government on fisheries, they produced a policy paper or manifesto totally incompatible with Britain's continued membership of the European Union.

But yesterday both John Major and Tory business managers offered a remarkably tolerant response. There was no rebuke and no hint that the rebels' conduct had made it harder for them to have the whip restored. Rather, the impression was that the Government is desperate for them to return to the fold as quickly as possible. No wonder, Tory pro-Europeans are increasingly worried about the Prime Minister's tilt in a Euro-sceptic direction. But many Tory MPs are keen for the rift to end soon now they think they have forced Labour on the defensive.

Reversing what turns out to have been a tactical mistake over removal of the Tory whip may make sense. But there will be a price if the Tory rebels appear to have won. Not only can the Government not afford repeated revolts like the one on Wednesday evening, but the rebels' views would split the party and the Government apart. Their manifesto, heavily influenced by Sir Teddy Taylor, has echoes of the "impossibilist" demands of the Trotskyite Militant Tendency in the 1980s. The group's eight aims for European policy — ranging from repatriation of agricultural and fisheries policy, via scrapping the economic and monetary union, to stopping the European Court from intervening in national policies — amount to a dismantling of the present European Union. Their demands would in effect tear up not only the Maastricht Treaty but also the Treaty of Rome.

The rebel MPs claim to be speaking for a large number of people in the Tory party and in the country. They probably do echo widespread

HIDDEN DYNAMICS

public frustrations about Brussels interference. But despite their claims to honesty and clarity, and the long-standing hostility of many to British participation in the European Union, their manifesto blurs the implications. It is a fantasy to pretend that the rest of the EU would ever agree to "substantial repatriation of decision making". The document states that "if such an endeavour should prove to be impossible, our national aim should be to seek a separate relationship with the EU, possibly on the basis of free trade and friendship only". That in practice means withdrawal and the Euro-rebels should have been candid enough to admit as much. Faced with such a choice, even in a referendum, my hunch is that the British public would again vote in favour of entry.

Differences within the group emerged at the news conference. Some take absolutist positions. Others, notably Nicholas Budgen, are more cautious. He does not expect all the manifesto aims to be achieved. What he wanted was looser relations between Britain and the rest of Europe and for the Cabinet to clarify its position after Mr Major's comments that he would veto any major constitutional changes at the inter-governmental conference next year. The rebels have a point when they argue that Mr Major's latest position of "thus far and no further" on constitutional changes is inconsistent with the views of most European leaders.

Sir Teddy Taylor, Richard Shepherd, Tony Marlow and the others have strongly held views on the issue. They are widely shared. But there is a danger of pretending that their views can be encompassed within Mr Major's general formula. They cannot. He is not doing his party any favours in the long term if he fails to point out the drastic, and divisive, implications of the Euro-rebels' manifesto.

PETER RIDDELL

Mayhew stays silent on secret deal claim

By Jonathan Prynne, Political Reporter

THE Northern Ireland Secretary faced hostile questioning in the Commons yesterday when he refused six times to deny that the Government had forged a secret deal to secure Unionist support in Wednesday's fisheries vote.

Six Ulster Unionist MPs voted with the Government and three abstained on Wednesday, helping the Prime Minister to stave off defeat by nine votes.

Sir Patrick Mayhew repeatedly sidestepped questions on

whether the Government had bought the Unionists' support with a promise not to set up an all-Ireland fishing body.

David Alton (Lib Dem, Liverpool Mossley Hill) told him: "Your failure to say that the Government is not involved in some sort of specific agreement will be read as confirmation that it is."

Seamus Mallon (SDLP, Newry and Armagh) said the Government was daily having "its nose tweaked" by the "bullying" Unionists.

IN PARLIAMENT

YESTERDAY: In the Commons, questions to Northern Ireland ministers were followed by a statement from Tony Newton, the Minister of State, about next week's Commons business. There were also debates on the Legal Aid Order and the Environment Order and the Environment Bill.

TODAY: In the Commons, there will be a second reading debate on the Home Energy Conservation Bill, a private member's Bill from Dame Maud (Lib Dem, Croydon). The Lords are not sitting.

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10 OVERSEAS NEWS

Five Britons kidnapped by Sierra Leone rebels

By MICHAEL BINYON, DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

FIVE Britons working for a Swiss-owned mining company in Sierra Leone have been kidnapped by armed rebels, the firm said yesterday. They were among ten Europeans seized on Wednesday after days of fierce fighting between the guerrillas and government troops in the area.

British diplomats were trying to send a message to the kidnappers urging them to release the hostages. They were named yesterday by the Sierra Leone Ore and Metal Company as James Westwood, the managing director, and his wife Sheila. Ross Mills, the operations manager, Thomas Collins and Daniel Cardam.

The Government airlifted a heavily armed rapid deployment force to the Mokanyi Hills, in the south, to try to track down the kidnappers, and soldiers were reported to be fighting suspected rebels near the site. Keli Conteh, the army Chief of Staff, claimed that his troops were winning the battle.

Whitehall officials yesterday expressed pessimism about an early end to the kidnapping. Two other Britons working for Voluntary Service Overseas are still being held after they were kidnapped by rebels last November at Kabala, about 155 miles northeast of Freetown, the capital. Foday Sankoh, the rebel leader, threatened a week ago to kill them if the military Government executed an officer accused of working with the guerrillas.

British diplomats in Freetown have been in touch with those holding the two volunteers, rather than relying too heavily on government help, and were hoping that they would be released soon. "Now

the situation is a great deal more serious," one said yesterday.

The rebels fighting the Government of Captain Valentine Strasser have been demanding that all foreign troops and advisers leave the country. As part of their campaign they have targeted Europeans and those working in the mines. On January 4, Robert Gaas, a Swiss, was kidnapped, and an unidentified Russian was seized late last year.

Captain Strasser, 28, seized power from President Momoh after a coup in 1992 with a promise to end the revolt by Mr Sankoh's Revolutionary United Front, which began in 1991.

The military leader, who was seriously wounded by guerrillas before he took power, accused the Momoh administration of corruption, self-indulgence, neglect of the army and mistreatment of the war against the rebels. However, they control most of the east of the country and earlier this month Captain Strasser said that he would step up the military campaign if they refused to negotiate a settlement.

Sierra Leone, one of the world's poorest countries, relies for its foreign earnings on the mines, which are run mostly by foreign companies. Security has now been stepped up at the American-owned Sierra Rutile mine, which is protected by a small staff of US Marines.

Captain Strasser, who has promised multi-party elections and a return to democracy by December, last year began a series of reforms to bring more discipline to the army. His Government executed 12 soldiers for crimes including robbery, murder and helping the rebels.



Children welcome the Pope to St Mary's Cathedral in Sydney yesterday where he celebrated Mass with the Sisters of St Joseph

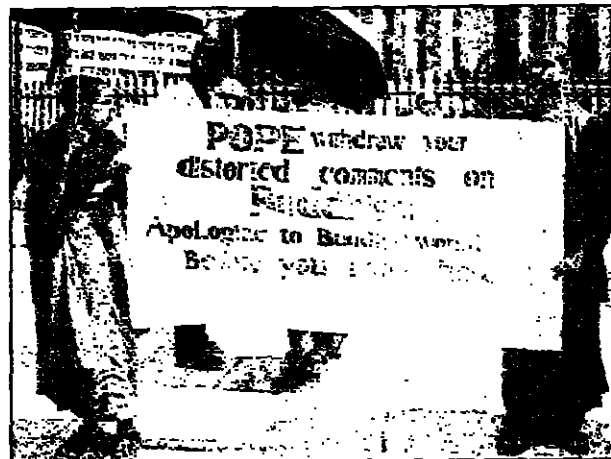
Pope met by protesting nuns in Sydney

FROM ROGER MAYNARD
IN SYDNEY AND
CHRISTOPHER THOMAS
IN COLOMBO

MORE than 200 Australian nuns staged a silent protest against the Pope's refusal to countenance the ordination of women to the priesthood when he spoke at St Mary's Roman Catholic Cathedral in Sydney yesterday.

Their protest forced the Pope to speak about the role of women in the church, although the nuns of the Order of Sisters of St Joseph, wearing lay clothes, refused to comment on the issue after their protest.

During the service the Pope acknowledged the issue, which has caused great controversy in the Catholic Church, saying: "I am convinced that a mistake in anthropology is at the root of the failure of society to understand church teaching and the true role of women. That role



Buddhists protest against the Pope's visit to Colombo

is in no way diminished but is in fact enhanced and liberated in a special way by motherhood."

The Pope was showing signs of fatigue by the end of his address, falling back into his chair and appearing to shake at one stage. But he

carried out the main purpose of his Australian visit, the beatification of Mother Mary MacKillop, founder of the Sisters of St Joseph. The ceremony, during which the 19th-century nun, the daughter of Scottish immigrants, became entitled to be

addressed as "Blessed" — the stage immediately before "Saint" — was held in front of a congregation of 200,000 at Sydney's Randwick racecourse.

Mother Mary, born in Melbourne in 1852, co-founded the Sisters of St Joseph, which is dedicated to performing social services. The Order, which was self-governing from the start, annoyed the church authorities who denounced the founder as an alcoholic. In 1871 she was even excommunicated for five months.

The Pope arrives today in Sri Lanka where 70 per cent of the country's 17 million population is Buddhist.

Buddhist monks have threatened to boycott the visit as a protest against remarks made in the Pope's recent book, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*. Some passages are seen as critical of Buddhist beliefs. The Catholic Church in Sri Lanka has expressed its regret on behalf of the Pope.

Envoy rejects CIA job

Washington: William Crowe, America's Ambassador in London, has refused a White House offer to become the new director of the CIA. (Martin Fletcher writes). Sources in Washington said he had more than once been "sounded out" in a very serious manner about filling the vacancy caused by James Woolsey's sudden resignation last month, but was not interested.

"I can categorically state that he's not on the list any more. He's taken himself off," a senior US official said, while Admiral Crowe told *USA Today* yesterday that he was "very pleased where I am".

His refusal presents Mr Clinton with a problem because the other leading contender, John Deutch, the Deputy Defence Secretary, has also declined the job. "The CIA is a sinking ship in a lot of people's eyes," an Administration source said.

Surrogate baby killed

New controversy enveloped the booming business of "surrogate parenting" in America yesterday after a Pennsylvania bachelor was charged with killing the son he paid a woman \$30,000 (£19,000) to bear (James Bone writes).

James Austin, 26, a bank official, is accused of beating his five-week-old son James to death with a plastic coat hanger, before the paperwork transferring the infant to him could be completed. Phylicia Huddleston, 29, the mother who was artificially inseminated, is now arranging the baby's funeral.

The case prompted calls for new controls on a largely unregulated industry. There are an estimated 1,500 surrogate births a year in the United States.

Serpent puts faith to test

A man died after he took the words of St Mark's gospel too literally and was bitten by a rattlesnake he had taken to his local church in Elgin, Georgia (Tom Rhodes writes). Dewey Hale, 40, had apparently been impressed by the biblical words which say that believers "shall take up serpents". When he placed his hand in the box to remove the reptile it bit into his hand. He was not taken to hospital and died later the same day. Martha Hale, his cousin, said: "The congregation feels that he did not die because of the snake but because it was his time to go".

'Sundance' TV planned



New York: The actor and director Robert Redford, above, is setting up his own cable television channel named after his famous role in *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (James Bone writes). Redford has announced a 50-50 joint venture with a division of the entertainment conglomerate Viacom to screen the work of independent film directors on the Sundance Film Channel. British-made films are expected to feature heavily.

Peacemaking President muses on life, love and lost causes

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER
IN WASHINGTON



A drawing from the Carter poetry book

JIMMY CARTER is back in the news, this time not as a peacemaker but as a poet. The former President has just published a book of 44 poems, *Always a Reckoning*, which makes him America's third poet-President after Lincoln and John Quincy Adams.

"It takes a lot of courage to write a book of poems and put it out for public scrutiny," Mr Carter said. And some of the poems are indeed very personal — but that has not prevented him from reading them on television chat shows or from signing thousands of copies at

bookshops around the country. Of his wife, Rosalynn, he writes: *She'd smile, and birds would feel that they no longer had to sing, or it may be I failed to hear their song.* He recalls how, as a lovesick young man, he would pursue Rosalynn to the cinema where *I'd pay to sit behind her, blind to what was on the screen, and watch the image flicker upon her hair.* It must be said that Mr Carter still stands a better chance of winning a Nobel Prize for peace than literature, but reviewers have so far been gentle.

He writes about growing up in rural Georgia and recalls the moment his black playmates instinctively refused to enter the gate to his father's farm: *We only saw it vaguely then but we were transformed at that place. A silent line was drawn between friend and friend, race and race.* He humorously recalls his early experiences in Georgia politics, including how he proposed a law that *citizens could never vote again after they had passed away.* *I lost the next campaign, and failed to carry a single precinct with a cemetery.* There is just one poem about the

White House that describes how he and Rosalynn stood on the roof one night and marvelled at a "primeval" formation of geese flying overhead. Another poem tells how he overcame British resistance to honouring his idol, Dylan Thomas, with a plaque in Westminster Abbey's Poet's Corner *... because, they said, his morals were below the standards there.*

The book, illustrated by Mr Carter's 17-year-old granddaughter, is his ninth. "I think it's a good book," he said with his usual modesty, "and it expresses a lot about me that I couldn't say otherwise."

200 die in Kashmir highway avalanche

FROM REUTERS
IN JAMMU

MORE than 200 people were believed dead and 400 others buried under snow when avalanches roared down Himalayan mountainsides along the Srinagar-Jammu highway, the United News of India said yesterday.

Reports coming in from various points along the road indicated that the final toll could be much higher because rescue teams had not yet reached some affected areas. The police said that as many as five buses had plunged off the 110-mile road that winds through the foothills of the Himalayas since heavy snowfalls hit the area three days ago. About 5,000 people had been rescued from vehicles stranded along the road.

The news agency said that 133 bodies had been recovered from the area since the avalanches began, and many more were thought to be buried in the snow.

It said 400 people were still taking refuge in the 1.7-mile-long Jawahar tunnel. Air force helicopters had dropped food and blankets around the mouth of the tunnel for the stranded travellers.

The road, which snakes through precipitous passes, provides the isolated Kashmir valley with its only road link to the rest of India.

Immunity row sparks Mandela cabinet crisis

FROM MICHAEL HAMLYN IN JOHANNESBURG

A CRISIS in President Mandela's coalition Government has blown up over the refusal of the Cabinet to grant immunity from prosecution to 3,500 police officers and at least two former cabinet ministers.

F.W. de Klerk, a Deputy President, denied yesterday that he has threatened to resign from the Cabinet, but it is clear that the refusal to pardon the former enforcers of apartheid is causing an upheaval.

The situation was said to have been aggravated by a bitter attack on the National Party and Mr de Klerk, its

leader, by President Mandela at a cabinet meeting. Mr de Klerk told reporters yesterday: "There is a cabinet situation which creates a serious situation. What is happening is not what I have been working for. I am deeply upset." He boycotted late evening talks on Wednesday between Mr Mandela and National Party ministers in the Cabinet.

□ Durban: Gunmen killed eight people, two of them children, in an attack on a coastal village near Port Shepstone in South Africa's KwaZulu-Natal province on Wednesday night. (Reuters)

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Black humour fails to lighten agony of despair in Chechen hospital ward

COURAGE vies with despair in the amputees' ward of the hospital in Urus Martan, a town 12 miles south of Grozny.

In one bed was a Chechen fighter named Nuradi, 21, whose leg was amputated above the knee after being hit by a bullet in fighting in Grozny on January 1. He rolled his eyes in his white face and said loudly to his companions: "Yet another journalist I'd better put on a good show for him, hadn't I?" He began to cry: "I'm dying, I'm dying," breaking off to roar with laughter. In his position, this was fortitude and humour on an epic scale.

Two other inhabitants of the ward were quieter, both members of the same medical team: Dr Ahmed Ammatov, who lost a leg



Anatoli Lieven visits the hospital at Urus Martan, where medical teams battle to save war victims. Many Chechen doctors are among the dead and wounded. Grozny's hospitals have been captured or destroyed

after being wounded in the Presidential Palace in Grozny this week, and his ambulance driver, Aslambek, who was wounded by a bomb in the town of Achikoi Martan on January 11, and who lost an arm. That two members of the same medical team should have

been badly wounded in separate incidents within a week is some indication of the scale of Chechen casualties.

Dr Abubakir Ibragimov, deputy director of the Urus Martan hospital, said: "We can't say how many doctors have been killed so far. But

we know that several of our friends have gone to help at the front, and we've heard nothing more from them."

His words were interrupted by screams from another bed. Misha Yefimov, eight, a Russian boy from southern Grozny, was having his dressings changed. He lost both his legs when Russian rockets hit his home on Monday. As the doctor worked on him, he cried for help from his mother, who was sitting beside him with an expression on her face which I cannot describe. The doctor and nurse attending him were both doing their best not to cry.

Dr Ibragimov asked me to appeal for help in Britain, to get proper artificial legs for Misha. "It is a terrible thing for a child of his

age with his life before him. We have no proper artificial legs here, and even if we did, the demand is going to be enormous."

The doctor said that since all the main hospitals in Grozny had been captured or destroyed, Urus Martan was now the main surgical hospital in Chechnya. He said it held 120 wounded, and the gynaecological, neurological and therapeutic wards had all been turned over to emergency cases.

He added that the hospital had only been able to keep going for two reasons: many doctors and nurses who had lost their hospitals in Grozny were now concentrated in Urus Martan; and a trickle of international aid from the International Red Cross and Médecins Sans Frontières had been able to

reach them. The hospital would be able to work only for another week, given the present influx of casualties. "We need everything connected with surgery, everything," he said. "Plasma, blood, anaesthetics, sterilising equipment."

Dr Ibragimov bitterly condemned the Russian attack and bombardment, but, like many Chechen doctors and the educated classes in general, he also denounced the Dudayev regime. "For three years we have had no new supplies because our Government has cared nothing for the health or well-being of its people. Doctors and nurses have not been paid those who have remained have done so only from commitment."

He also blamed General Dudayev for frightening away

many ethnic Russian doctors. "Here, there are no questions of nationality. There are only patients and those who help them."

The hospital at Urus Martan is a clean, orderly and well-equipped place compared with some of the filthy, dilapidated hospitals in smaller towns, also now packed with wounded. In Dr Ibragimov's words: "In many places, they can't even sterilise equipment and they have no sterile overalls. They are carrying out operations dressed in their ordinary clothes."

The dead on the Chechen side, military and civilian, must stand at 1,000 at least, and could be many more. The military casualties are obviously overwhelmingly Chechen; civilian ones appear to be ethnic Russians from Grozny.

DAVID BRANCH

Yeltsin declares military victory as Palace falls

FROM RICHARD BEESTON IN MOSCOW

RUSSIA'S military campaign in Chechnya is over, President Yeltsin announced yesterday after his troops captured the Presidential Palace in the breakaway republic's capital, Grozny. It was also announced in Moscow that three generals who opposed the intervention had been sacked as deputy defence ministers.

Hours after infantrymen from the Urals hoisted the Russian tricolour over the devastated remains of the multi-storey concrete structure in the heart of Grozny, the Russian leader announced that the process of rebuilding and reconciliation could begin.

"The military stage of restoring power of the Russian Federation's constitution in Chechnya has actually finished," said a statement released by President Yeltsin, who said the next stage would

be the "restoration of Chechnya's life support system" and the "protection of human rights".

"On this day, which gave us the hope of restoring peace, I bow my head before the memory of soldiers killed in this conflict and to the victims of the suffering civilian population," he said.

President Yeltsin's move was widely expected. Although the victory may be largely symbolic, it is convincing enough for him to halt the first stage of the campaign and begin trying to patch up his battered image at home and abroad.

The Russian leader still faces many serious obstacles in Chechnya from continued resistance to Russian rule, and in Moscow from the political, military and economic fall-out from his unpopular, bungled and costly campaign. Al-

though the first phase of the military objective has been achieved, it was not clear how President Yeltsin planned to restore his authority over the rest of the republic.

General Dzhokhar Dudayev, the Chechen separatist leader, is still at large with thousands of well-armed supporters who have vowed to continue their struggle in the rugged mountains which provide ideal cover for guerrillas.

In Moscow, recriminations over the military action were beginning yesterday, as the Ministry of Defence confirmed that three senior generals, critical of the handling of the campaign, had been sacked as deputy defence ministers. They were named as: Colonel-General Boris Gromov, Colonel-General Georgi Kondratyev and Colonel-General Viktor Minorov.

But the disgruntled generals will not be the only ones to suffer. It is widely expected that General Pavel Grachev, the Defence Minister in charge of the Chechen operation, will also go.

Yesterday the Ministry of Defence confirmed that it would stop using inexperienced conscripts in Chechnya. The teenage soldiers, many of whom had only fired a rifle once before being sent on suicidal operations in Grozny, were among the heaviest casualties.

Vladimir Shumeiko, the Speaker of the Federation Council, the upper house of parliament, said those responsible for ordering the conscripts into battle would be punished. His remarks appeared to be directed at General Grachev and Sergei Stepashin, the head of the counter intelligence service, who helped to direct operations.



An anguished woman walks away from a victim of air attacks on Grozny which continued yesterday despite a proposed ceasefire

Russian liberal attacks 'weakness' of West

FROM RICHARD BEESTON IN MOSCOW

RUSSIA'S most popular political figure yesterday rebuked the West for not taking a tougher and more principled stand against President Yeltsin over the conflict in Chechnya.

Grigori Yavlinsky, the liberal leader of the Yabloko faction and a possible presidential candidate, deplored the weak stand taken by Western governments, including Britain, and insisted that only a resolute approach would benefit Russian democracy and Western interests.

"My message to the West is, 'be honest with Russia,'" he said, after a visit to London where he made similar appeals to British officials. "It is extremely important that the West says explicitly to Yeltsin that what he is doing is unacceptable from the point of view of democracy and human rights,

and that he cannot count on their support if the war continues."

His remarks reflected a deep sense of betrayal among many Russian liberals who have spoken out against the violence in Chechnya, where thousands of people have been killed and tens of thousands made homeless since Russian troops invaded the breakaway republic on December 11.

Although Western governments have called for a halt to hostilities, their protests have been largely muted. Almost every Western power still supports Mr Yeltsin and in the words of one senior diplomat, the only question remaining is "whether to slap him once on the wrist, or twice."

In defence of their policy, Western officials have berated the absence of a clear pro-reformist alternative to Mr Yeltsin. But Mr Yavlinsky, who is currently top of the opinion polls, is projecting himself as the natural choice

for the presidential elections next year, or earlier if the Chechen conflict causes the President's premature removal from power.

Mr Yavlinsky, 42, a charismatic figure, came to prominence in 1991 when he drafted a blueprint for the rapid reform of the Russian economy, called the 500-Day Plan, which Mikhail Gorbachev, the former Soviet leader, turned down as too radical.

Since then he has been one of the most ardent supporters of democratic reform in Russia and helped to establish the radical experiment in free market economics that has transformed the city of Nizhny Novgorod into one of the most successful areas in post-communist Russia.

In the Duma, the Lower House of parliament, where he heads a party with about 25 seats, he has been an active campaigner against the increased authority acquired by Mr

Yeltsin and last week proposed a law that would limit the Kremlin's use of force in the future. The Bill was voted down by ultra-nationalists, but Mr Yavlinsky, undeterred, said: "Whatever happens in this country, I intend to go all the way."

□ Sofia: Eduard Shevardnadze, Georgia's leader, said yesterday that Moscow had brought the Chechen crisis upon itself by displaying double standards towards aggressive separatism. In a newspaper interview coinciding with a visit to Sofia he linked the crisis to alleged Russian support of separatists in the breakaway Georgian region of Abkhazia who drove out government forces in September 1993. Mr Shevardnadze said the bloodshed in Grozny was due to the fact that Russia had not intervened earlier. (Reuters)

Leading article and Letters, page 19

Agnelli adds touch of class to Cabinet

FROM JOHN PHILLIPS IN ROME

WOMAN IN THE NEWS

ITALIANS were gripped yesterday by the versatile career of Susanna Agnelli, sister of Gianni, the Fiat industry magnate, who has capped her privileged and extraordinary life by becoming the country's first woman Foreign Minister and the first member of her illustrious family to enter Government.

Signora Agnelli, 72, is the best known and most popular member of the technocratic Cabinet of Lamberto Dini, the Prime Minister, that was sworn in on Tuesday night. She also is the only woman among the 22 ministers.

She took over at the Farnesina, the Fascist-era foreign ministry building on the banks of Tiber, on Wednesday, replacing Antonio Martino, who had been installed there since May as part of Silvio Berlusconi's coalition Government.

Four spells as a junior minister in the Foreign Ministry between 1986 and 1991 mean that she is familiar with

the workings of the diplomatic corps. Signora Agnelli is also a mother of six, married to Count Urbano Rattazzi. For a time they lived in Argentina and their son Cristiano works at Fiat's Argentinian subsidiary company.

Nicknamed "Sun" by her family, she was elected to Parliament in 1976 for the Republican Party, the small "lay" grouping that is close to big business while theoretically distinct from the Christian Democrats and their successors, the Italian People's Party (PPI). In 1981 she was elected a member of the European Parliament and in 1983 a senator. She remained a member of the Republican Party's national council until 1992.

Her long experience in politics is unique in her family except for a brief flirtation between her other brother, Umberto, and the Christian Democrats. Gianni Agnelli has always shunned politics, although his position as owner



Susanna Agnelli, Italy's first woman Foreign Minister

of Italy's largest private company has earned him the reputation of being the uncrowned King of Italy and his pronouncements on the country and its politics are treated with respect.

Signora Agnelli is well

known for her writings, including a book about her childhood in which she describes the fear she and her brothers felt for their grandfather, Giovanni.

Denis MacShane, page 18

Delors takes leave on downbeat note

FROM GEORGE BROCK IN STRASBOURG

EUROPE should haul itself out of its current pessimism and paralysis and go forward to monetary union and joint defence policies, Jacques Delors told the European Parliament yesterday in a surprisingly downbeat farewell to an assembly which contains some of his most ardent fans.

M. Delors, who stands down as President of the European Commission on Monday, received a standing ovation and was presented with a lavishly produced book of his own speeches. In his speech yesterday, he pleaded with national governments not to turn the European Union into a "Gulliver in chains", lacking workable institutions for making joint decisions.

The best institutions, he said, would be federal ones. Only the "federal approach" could clearly define what sovereignty should be transferred to the centre and what should remain with national states.

Only federalism "allows democratic control and can punish abuses of power. Only

federalism can guarantee respect for national character and regional variety."

But M. Delors admitted that the EU was "distant from its citizens" and could progress only if governments took voters along with them. He reaffirmed his conviction that Europe could only be truly united when it had a single currency and common military forces, concluding: "The springtime of Europe is still before us."

In spite of this robust re-statement of his familiar themes, however, it was hard to escape a sense that M. Delors believes that a united Europe is further away than ever. His recent interviews and speeches have been sprinkled with pessimistic asides aimed at politicians he thinks lack the courage to fight for the federalist dream.

Speeches by MEPs yesterday emphasised that M. Delors's place in European history is already assured.

Leading article, page 19

Threat to kill missing US officer and son

BY OUR FOREIGN STAFF

ABOUT 100 Turkish and American troops are searching for a US Air Force officer and his ten-year-old son who were reported missing after a trip to Karakaya resort in Bolu province, 70 miles west of Ankara.

An anonymous telephone caller claiming to be in Turkey called Israel Radio and threatened to kill Lieutenant-Colonel Mike Couillard, 37, unless Israel freed Mustafa Dirani, a captured Lebanese cleric.

Israel kidnapped Mr Dirani from his

home in southern Lebanon last May as a bargaining chip for Ron Arad, an Israeli air navigator missing since 1986 and believed once held by Mr Dirani.

The colonel works in the American Embassy in Ankara in the Office of Defence Co-operation, Commander Chuck Franklin, a Pentagon official, said in Washington.

The call to Israel Radio came as other callers telephoning a Turkish news agency and a television station claimed that they held the American and his son and that they would be killed in 48 hours unless the cleric was freed. The Israeli

Radio caller gave no deadline. Hadas Matas, a telephone operator for Israel Radio, said that the caller to her station spoke in English, in an accent that did not sound either Israeli or Arabic. American and Israeli officials have cast doubt on the authenticity of the kidnapping claim. Israeli security sources said that the action did not fit the pattern of Islamic extremists, who usually avoid abducting women or children.

The sources also noted that the kidnappers had not released any photographs or other identification; militants usually do so to prove a kidnapping.

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'I can walk myself' survivor tells rescuers after two days in wreckage without food and water

Eighty-year-old women pulled alive from rubble

FROM GWEN ROBINSON IN TOKYO

RESCUE OPERATION

AT LEAST 3,600 people were confirmed dead by last night in the Kobe earthquake and hopes are fading for more than 660 still missing, many trapped under the rubble.

Nearly 22,000 people were injured, and about 270,000 survivors have been accommodated in makeshift refuges in 620 schools and halls. Rescue workers picking through the devastation found seven people who had miraculously survived through the winter weather and two days buried under collapsed buildings without food or water. Two 80-year-old women were found alive in Nishinomiya, east of Kobe. One, Yoshimi Nomura, was badly hurt. The other, Setsuko Orii, was only scratched — even her spectacles were intact. She told rescuers who tried to carry her away: "I can walk myself."

Also in Nishinomiya, Shin-suke Yamada, nine, was trapped for 57 hours, still conscious, in the ruins of the block of flats where he lived. Kyodo news agency reported. A bulldozer team uncovered him and took him to hospital. Yesterday morning two men,

aged 74 and 94, were pulled from collapsed houses in the city of Ashiya, also to the east of Kobe. They had survived beneath the wreckage for more than 50 hours.

A national campaign calling for volunteer workers and donations of cash and goods was gaining momentum yesterday, but the two-day delay in starting relief efforts has already taken its toll: dazed and dishevelled survivors who have been living in intense cold and extremely cramped conditions at the evacuation centres spoke of severe shortages of food and water and appalling sanitary arrangements. Public health workers last night issued a warning of potential outbreaks of disease if conditions do not improve.

Stricken survivors could still be seen last night, frantically digging through rubble with their bare hands searching for friends and relatives.

Rescue workers, spurred on by yesterday's discoveries of trapped survivors, stepped up

their search efforts. They had been greatly hampered in the first 36 hours after the quake by shortages of digging equipment, emergency vehicles, and other resources.

Firefighters, meanwhile, battled more than 90 new fires that broke out yesterday after rescuers finally collapsed, causing gas tanks to explode. Their efforts were also hindered by severe shortages of water, personnel and vehicles. The shortcomings of the firefighting and rescue operations have both come under heavy criticism from survivors and commentators. On the first day alone more than 105 fires burned throughout the night and quickly spread because of the shortage of water and personnel. Large sections of the city were destroyed.

Critics say that hundreds of lives and many buildings could have been saved if the relevant government agencies had prepared more comprehensive disaster-relief strategies. Japan's military forces

have also been criticised for their slow response.

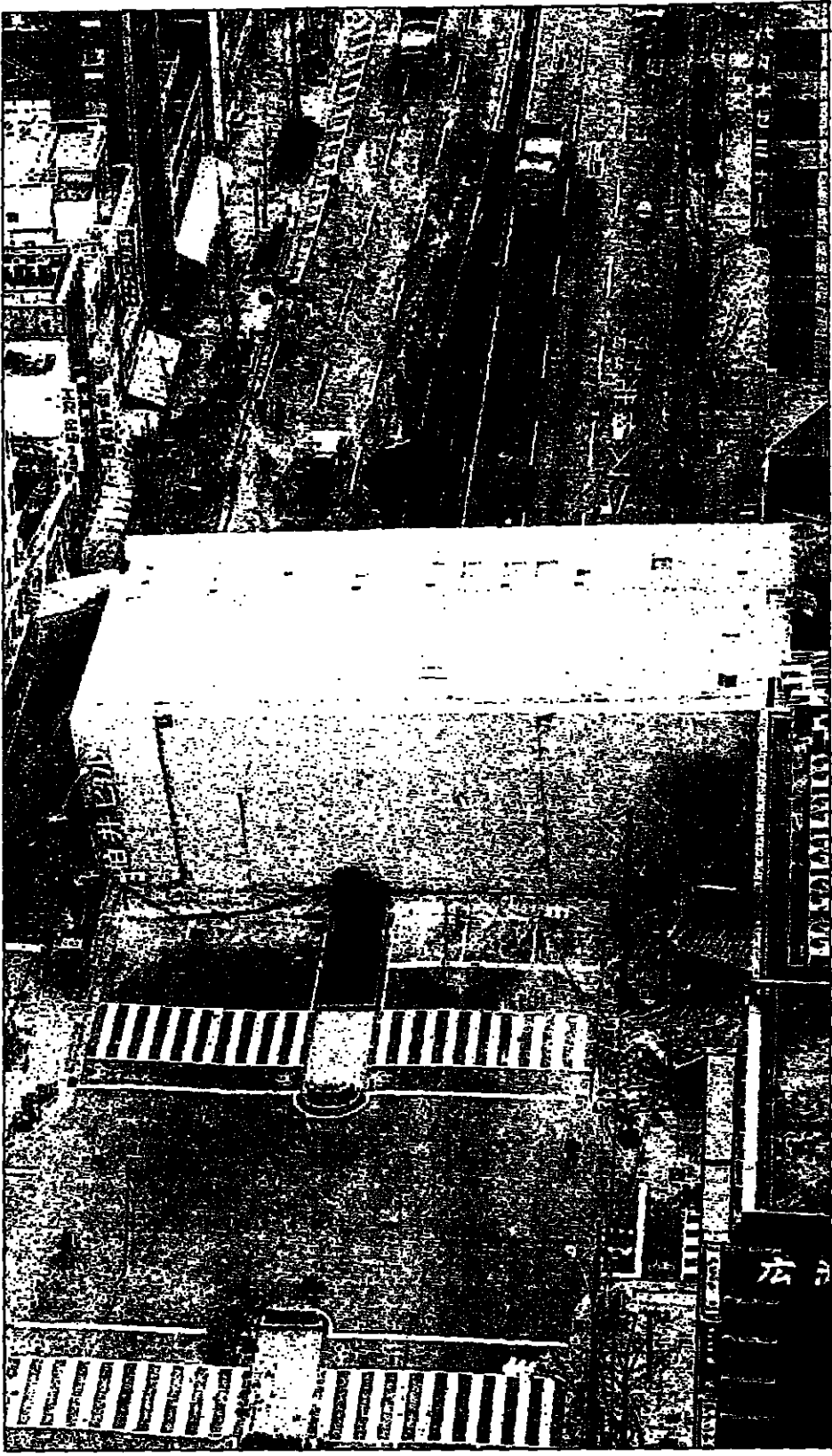
The Defence Agency announced yesterday that it was sending nearly 15,000 troops to the affected region to assist rescue operations and disperse food, water and medical treatment. For two days after the quake, however, military and police workers were in short supply.

Nobuo Ishihara, the deputy chief Cabinet secretary, conceded that the Government "should do some soul-searching" about the delay in starting military rescue efforts. At the same time the Government reversed its earlier opposition to accepting foreign assistance. A team of sniffer dogs arrived from Switzerland with 25 Swiss search personnel to join the relief operation.

The Government had earlier rejected offers of help from foreign governments, including Britain, which said it would help the quake victims in any way needed. That offer has yet to be taken up.

Tomichi Murayama, Japan's Prime Minister, toured stricken areas yesterday and announced that the Government would provide "condolence money" totalling ten billion yen (about £65 million) to the bereaved families of those who died in the quake. The fund will provide some £32,000 to each family which had lost its main breadwinner; others will receive up to £16,000.

Mr Murayama has also undertaken that the Government will shoulder most of the cost of reconstruction of the devastated areas. But it is not clear if individuals who lost their homes will be eligible for assistance. Insurance industry officials said on Wednesday that Kobe and its environs had the lowest proportion of earthquake insurance policy holders of any area in Japan.



A building toppled by the earthquake lies across a six-lane motorway in Kobe

Residents face life without the basics

FROM PAGE 1

the government has done to help the stricken city. Some 90 per cent of Kobe is without running water. Suddenly, the city's people, used to running water at the touch of a tap, do not know where to find it. So far, Kobe's authorities have organised a fleet of 250 vehicles to deliver water, but that may not be enough.

In Nagata, one of the worst hit areas of Kobe, the fires still smoulder while survivors search the blackened ruins for anything which somehow might have survived the blaze. The massive stone pillars of Nagata Shrine lie across the road. In the shrine courtyard, a group of old people huddle around a fire to keep warm. One of them, Mr Matsuo, a man in his 70s, gestures towards the flaming timbers. "That's what my house looks like now. I've lived here 40 years, and now all I have are the clothes I'm wearing and some blankets from the shrine." Like many Japanese, he has no insurance, but at least he has somewhere to sleep along with 200 homeless people who have been given refuge in the shrine.

Not far away, the tiny spire of a wooden church rises over the roofs of the few houses still standing in the area. Inside, a collection of people, a young girl and a boy with Down's Syndrome eat a simple meal. A woman greets me warmly as a fellow Christian, and tells me how the earthquake is really a blessing.

"We Japanese have forgotten God. We have become too materialistic." She is on the verge of tears, but somehow she continues. "God has not forgotten us. Now having seen his power, we will remember Him. It is a blessing and we must be grateful."

Thousands trek out of city

FROM ASSOCIATED PRESS IN NISHINOMIYA

ON ONE of the few trains still running, well-dressed workers on their way to Osaka offices sat alongside grimy, bleary-eyed quake victims. Thousands of refugees had trekked out of Kobe, ravaged by earthquake and fire. The nearest railway station that still had service to neighbouring Osaka was a 3½-hour walk away. Noriko Sato, a housewife, hiked out of one of the worst affected areas with her husband and two children.

REFUGEES

It's a miracle none of us was injured," she said, "but we have to leave. There's no water or gas or food." The main Osaka-Kobe road was closed yesterday, except for supply and emergency vehicles, which were making progress for the first time. Up until then, even ambulances with sirens wailing had sat trapped for hours in mammoth jams. In Kobe's burnt-out centre, small knots of mourners gathered at homes

that had collapsed; the rubble was dotted with bouquets.

Authorities were so busy with the immediate task of saving lives that other concerns were ignored. At the site of a Kobe chemical factory that had collapsed the air was heavy with an acrid smell. The street was blocked off with barrels marked "Danger".

Fires flared again yesterday in central Kobe, and an old woman wept by her partially collapsed house as flames approached. "It's inherited from my ancestors," she said, "I cannot let it burn."

Mob of ministering angels hands out bread and noodles

FROM GWEN ROBINSON IN TOKYO

ONE of Japan's most notorious yakuza organized crime gangs has emerged from the smouldering ruins of the earthquake-devastated city of Kobe to prove that every cloud has a silver lining.

The lavish, modern headquarters of the Yamaguchi-Gumi, Japan's largest yakuza gang, sits behind an elegant stone wall and a row of decorative pine trees in Nada, the suburb of Kobe hardest hit by Tuesday's quake.

The spacious home of Yoshinori Watanabe, the gang's boss, is right next door. Both buildings survived the quake unscathed. In normal times the shuttered windows

GANGS

and video surveillance cameras mounted on the premises lend the buildings a sinister air. But in the chaotic days since the quake, this citadel of crime has been transformed. Gang members have been giving away food, water and other relief goods to survivors of the quake. News of their action has spread quickly and more than 200 people lined up in front of the gang's headquarters yesterday. The gangsters handed out bread, instant noodles, powdered milk and even nappies, residents told a Japanese news service.

"The gang is taking the place of the authorities," a middle-aged woman in the

queue said, praising the gangsters' "justice and humanity". She added: "It is up to the individual whether to accept the goods, but I certainly will."

The Yamaguchi gang was formed in Kobe in 1915 and today has 23,100 members in branches throughout Japan, according to police figures. The police estimate the syndicate's annual income at well over 270 billion yen (£1.7 billion), most of it gained through an empire of legal and illegal operations, including gambling, prostitution, and loan-sharking.

Mr Watanabe is practically a god in Japan's active underworld, a shady community which comprises some 3,300 organised crime groups, according to the police.

Earthquake experts caught in disaster

BY ANJANA AFZUA

AMONG those caught in the earthquake this week were about 240 seismologists and other academics who had gathered for a three-day conference in Osaka to discuss the effects of such disasters on urban areas.

The meeting has been suspended, but many of the Japanese and American experts have stayed to study the aftermath of the quake.

"It was a very big earthquake in a densely populated area, and people have been into the field to look at the damage. It is very unfortunate," said Susan Tubbesing, director of the Earthquake Research Institute in California, a professional association

OSAKA

which has 2,500 social scientists in the field as members.

Ms Tubbesing, who also studies how people respond to such disasters, said it was too early to draw conclusions about the victims' behaviour. □ Escape plan: Some of the nine students and a lecturer from Stirling University are planning to walk from Kobe to Osaka today if official rescue attempts fail. They said they were in danger and losing patience with failed official attempts to evacuate them. "Our living conditions are getting worse all the time, and we're just desperate to get out," one said.



Relatives post notices in central Kobe asking for information about missing people

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Governor refuses to give files to Peking

FROM JONATHAN MURPHY IN HONG KONG

CHINA'S demand to be given the files on Hong Kong's civil servants has been rejected by Chris Patten, the Governor, as illegal and immoral.

Three days ago Lu Ping, Peking's senior official with responsibility for Hong Kong, threatened that the colony's refusal to hand over the files, almost 900 days before the transfer of sovereignty on July 1, 1997, would result in Chinese action "in which we will not be polite". He was particularly keen to see the records of senior civil servants.

Then came an official warning that failure to hand over the files would imperil the visit to Britain this spring of Qian Qichen, the Chinese Foreign Minister. The trip had been seen as a sign of a thaw in Anglo-Chinese relations.

The Chinese say they want evidence of the nationality of Hong Kong's civil servants, as well as of their integrity. But the civil servants fear that Peking wishes to vet their loyalty.

Mr Patten yesterday pounded the table in the Legislative Council and said: "I don't want there to be a single scintilla of doubt" that the Government will not show Peking evidence of applications by civil servants for British passports. "That is their own business."

Singapore's 'lapdog' press bites back

BY CHRISTOPHER THOMAS

BOOTLICKERS, prostitutes, lapdogs and sycophants: Singapore's newspapers have escaped no epithets. They are, certainly, respectful of authority and there is no need for the Government to control them with crude censorship.

The Straits Times glows with admiration for most things governmental and can be counted on to support official campaigns on anything from saving money to keeping the streets clean. There are, however, stirrings of more robust journalism, to the extent of gentle chiding of the Government.

The Sunday Times, its sister paper, published an article by Catherine Lim, a local author, criticising huge pay increases to ministers and top civil servants.

"Journalists here do not subscribe to the view that we are the fourth estate," said Han Fook Kwang, deputy political editor of The Straits Times, who asked a rather

startling question of himself in an article last week: "How do I live with myself writing this column?"

This was in response to a piece in The Asian Wall Street Journal that mocked The Straits Times for pandering to the Government. "Most [foreign] newspapers are beholden to the view of their publishers, to the pandering to populist tastes, [and] that has made many newspapers sink to ever lower levels of gutter journalism," Mr Han wrote.

He noted that a survey in London's Times in 1993 showed that only one in ten people in Britain believed what journalists wrote. "It is from this perspective that Singapore journalists view attacks from their British or American counterparts. We take them with a large pinch of salt."

Mr Han said The Straits Times was pro-Singapore. It

would support any government that was honest, effective and efficient in enhancing Singapore's well-being. He said that The Straits Times had run stories about the political opposition, "but there are four opposition members in the 81-member chamber. The scale of our reporting is proportionate to the range of activity they generate." He noted that journalists in Singapore operated in an environment in which people generally showed respect for authority.

Cheong Yip Seng, the Editor-in-Chief, defended his newspaper in a letter to The Asian Wall Street Journal last week. "We make no bones about what we believe to be Singapore's critical success factors, like thrift, hard work, honesty in government," he said. The paper tried to report the news as accurately as possible and provide a forum for its readers to speak their

minds, "so long as what they say is not defamatory or inflammatory".

David Marshall, an outspoken critic of the Government, has attacked the local press for its timidity, but he says he understands the problems journalists face.

"There is control of the mass media without any cross censorship. The owners of the major newspapers were put into one company, Singapore Press Holdings, which has two types of shares: ordinary and management. No-one who is not approved by the Government can buy management shares. And the directors can only be elected by the management shareholders."

The Government controls what appears on television and has banned satellite dishes. It has also punished several foreign publications in reprisal for articles that caused offence.

China's population reaches 1.2 billion

FROM JAMES PRINGLE IN PEKING

FIVE years earlier than planned, China's population will exceed 1.2 billion by the middle of next month, the official China Daily reported yesterday.

Last year, the population grew by 58,000 a day, or 40 a minute. However, a health official said that 300 million births were averted during the past two decades as a result of the family planning programme launched in 1973, which involves the use of abortion, forced sterilisation and strong encouragement

to use contraceptives. Had the growth rate of 1973 continued, the population would have reached 1.2 billion in 1986 and 1.5 billion by the end of last year, Yang Kuifu, Vice-Minister of the state family planning commission, said. Now the target is to keep the population below 1.3 billion at the end of the century, he added. At present, the population is increasing at an annual rate of 12 million, with about 21 million births each year.

At the same time as it issued yesterday's reports, the Chinese Government gave further assurances that the health of Deng Xiaoping, the country's senior

leader, gave no cause for immediate concern. There was apparent confusion, however, because Deng Rong, Mr Deng's daughter, had been quoted last week as saying there had been a significant decline in her father's health in recent months.

Ms Deng told The New York Times last Friday that her father could neither stand nor walk and that his health was declining day by day. But Shen Guofang, the Foreign Ministry spokesman, said at a weekly news briefing yesterday: "In general, for a man in his nineties, Mr Deng is in good health."

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Philip Howard



A new dictionary will help us to avoid confusing our foreign friends

Herman the German speaks as gutturally as your neighbour in the window seat on the Glasgow Super-Shuttle using the sick-bag: "Ich bin ein student of your unsympathetic English, and I overhear these false friends of yours. Their ratio and politics irritate me. Why does your English recipe for marmalade have oranges and lemons, but never strawberries or apricots? On the other hand, why do you call Christmas pudding and bread-and-butter puddings puddings? Any German knows that the Pudding means one thing only, the sloppy milk shape you euphemise as blancmange. No wonder foreigners call the English 'puddings'. Zis is my reclamation."

The German *Reklamation* means a query or complaint. *Marmelade* in German is jam made from any sort of fruit, not just oranges. In German *irritieren* means to confuse someone. Although a laborious student, Herman has been taken in by several other false English friends. A false friend is a word in a foreign language which looks or sounds like a word in your own language but has a different meaning. When Herman says *Ratio* he means reason, and *Politik* means policy for him. In German "overhear" means to be tired of hearing something.

False friends are created by two causes. Many English words started from the same origins as similar words in other Indo-European languages, but have developed different meanings. Words start changing their meanings for native speakers separated by as little as a river or a parish boundary. They are changed much more and more strangely by a sea or national frontier. For example, "sensible" in English looks like *sensibile* (French, Spanish) and *sensibel* (German, Danish, Norwegian, Swedish). But it does not have the same meaning. In these other languages, the words mean the same as the English "sensitive". A preservative may mean a substance to keep jam or bodies fresh in English. But in Italian, French, Spanish, German, Danish, Czech, Polish and Russian it means a condom. In French, *Condom* is a town or a rugby-player.

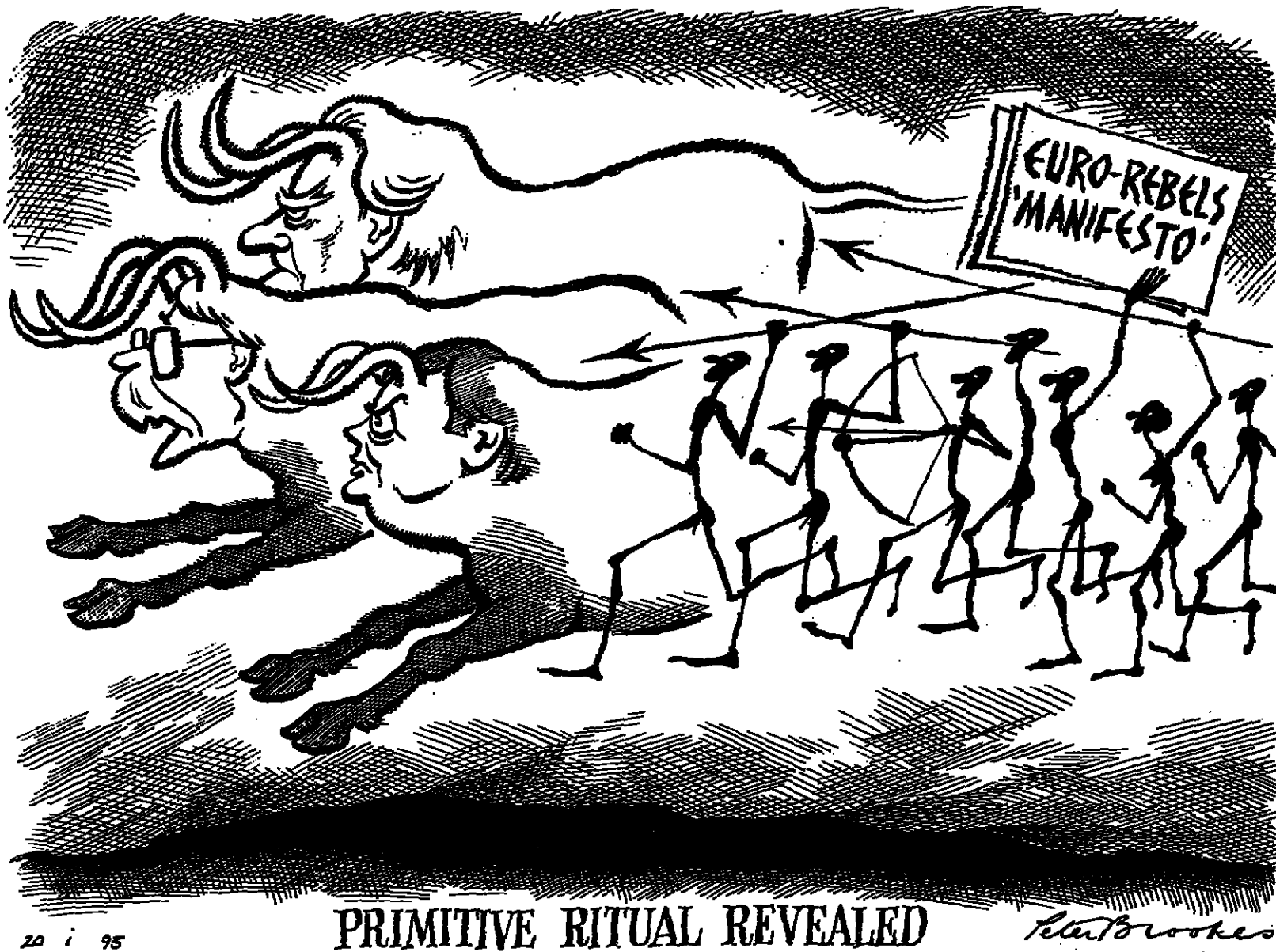
The second way in which false friends let learners down is when English words have been borrowed by other languages for new purposes. For example, "super" has been snatched by several other languages, but not to mean a police superintendent or the jolly-hockey-sticks and old-fashioned English expression of delight. In Japanese and Korean, *super* means a supermarket. In Thai, to confuse us, it means unleaded petrol.

Sabine, the Frenchwoman, speaks: "I ignore (don't know) the traffic (funny business) of your distracting (entertaining) language, by which you call my *scotch* Sello-tape, and my *blouse* means a woman's bodice instead of an overall or a snooker pooter."

Such false friends and traitors of idiom and accent mean that only brilliant linguists (such as George Steiner, who does not quite know what his first language is) are ever going to speak a second language without betraying that they are not to the mannerism born. The best way to learn a language is to live with the native-speakers. But computers are making second languages as well as many other things easier for us all.

To make a dictionary, once upon a Samuel, poor drudges toiled over slips in garrets for decades, ruining their eyesight and their handwriting. A modern computer can in a minute rifle through a database of language, identifying false friends for different languages, finding the frequency of collocations (such as *heavy rain* rather than *strong, fat* is strong rather than powerful), and marking the most common errors of Herman and how they differ from Sabine's and Kazuo's.

Next month, Cambridge University Press is launching a new line of English-language reference books with its *International Dictionary of English*. This will vex Oxford University Press and others who have been longer in the field. It may be one of the last great dictionaries between hard covers before computers and screens take over. But the public market for dictionaries is inexhaustible. Welcome this latest exposé of *amis faux* and other wonderful quirks and quarks of language.



PRIMITIVE RITUAL REVEALED

Imagine: Levin & Levin

Now, now, now, now! You didn't think, did you, that I would — nay, that I could — keep out of the Saatchi business? Shame on you if you did! For it is one of those rare but immensely delightful upshots in which to my eye everybody involved is perfectly awful. So awful, indeed, that it is impossible for those on the sidelines (which means everyone except the Saatchis and their opponents) to take sides. But to make sure, I have ordered, all on my cost, a huge quantity of deckchairs and ice-cream cones.

Let's start with the Saatchis themselves. Who are they? If you look in *Who's Who* you will get a considerable shock. For Saatchi the elder (Charles) gives barely three lines which tell us nothing, not even the names of his parents, and his junior (Maurice) adds nothing except that he studied at LSE. (Well, so did I, but I'm not awful.)

The only Saatchis in the Business section of the phone-book are all offshoots of the Saatchi empire itself, and there is no Saatchi at all in the personal book. (Mind you, there are only three Raskins in the book, and all of them are my family; but at least I know where I come from, and I am not too shy to tell the world.) Until the Saatchis tell us, then, I shall go about saying that they started in the stews of Cairo, barely getting a livelihood by selling used carpets.

But did you see the letter, published in full in *The Times*, in which Saatchi junior vented his spleen (for something like 40 years I have waited for an opportunity to get that phrase into something I am writing, and at last I have succeeded)? Why don't people in the spleen-venting business stop a moment and consult me? The letter was a savage assault upon the villains (as Saatchi would think them), and I dare say he went to bed well pleased by the number of wounds he counted upon his enemies. But I could have told him, and would have told him if, as I say, he had listened to me. Because, his head buried in the pseudo-science of advertising, he could not understand that when there is a battle, and it is manifestly won by X, anything said by Y in the form of squealing or shouting or screaming, let alone all three, is discounted in its entirety, having been instantly stored by the bystanders in the file labelled sour grapes.

Anyway, advertising is a pseudo-science, and anybody with a bit of

imagination and intelligence could succeed in it. And — I bet you didn't know this — I tried my hand at it, many years ago, with enormous success, and would have wiped out the entire clan Saatchi if I had continued.

It was like this. My beloved friend Sidney Bernstein was an iconoclast, among other things, and he delighted in clashing the icons. Sidney loved his Granada television station passionately, but he also loved to pull the rug from under the experts, and he had got into his head that the experts were wrong when they said that it was a waste of money to push the advertising in the

Bernard Levin

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Anyway, advertising is a pseudo-science, and anybody with a bit of

A Fascist at Chatham House?

Denis MacShane deplores a shaming invitation

Chatham House, as the Royal Institute for International Affairs is familiarly known, is Britain's premier think-tank on foreign policy. Founded in 1920, it gained world renown with Arnold Toynbee's legendary pre-war annual surveys of global politics. Its patron is the Queen, and its presidents are the Lords Callaghan, Jenkins and Carrington. Funded by the Government and blue-chip firms, it is a haven for retired diplomats who remain among the most intellectually capable of Britain's public servants. Unlike other countries, where there is some pluralism in foreign policy discussion, Chatham House's prestige and patronage has overshadowed other bodies seeking to challenge conventional foreign policy.

Yet now Chatham House's reputation is to be put to the test by its extraordinary decision to provide a platform for the rising star of Europe's reborn Fascist movement, Gianfranco Fini, leader of the Italian extreme Right.

Fini is general secretary of the MSI party in Italy, the dominant component in the *Alleanza Nazionale*, which entered Berlusconi's coalition Government last year. The MSI was set up by Giorgio Almirante, who was an official in the Nazi-backed puppet republic of Salò, set up for Mussolini after the dictator was ousted from Rome. Almirante hand-picked the articulate, personable Fini as his successor, and Fini has never swerved from his declaration that "Mussolini was the greatest statesman of the 20th century".

Under Berlusconi, Fini himself avoided any ministerial portfolio, concentrating on the twin tasks of building his party and polishing his image as a charismatic television performer. Although he likes to proclaim himself "post-Fascist", Fini has taken care to assure his followers that on all the major themes associated with Fascism he is true to the faith. Explaining his support for Fascism as a student in the 1960s, Fini says "I was a Fascist at a time when all right-wingers were called Fascist. I claimed the label because what others considered an insult to me meant belonging to my political family, the MSI".

The evidence that Fini still cleaves to core elements of Fascist ideology is overwhelming. He is irreligious and his party wants to incorporate Fiume and Dalmatia into Italy. Two years ago, he sailed to the Slovene and Croatian coasts and flung 2,000 bottles into the sea carrying the message *Ritornello* ("We will return"). He adores the trappings of Fascist ceremony. At *Alleanza Nazionale* rallies, his youth section enforces security with black-shirted squads. Fini's rousing speeches are punctuated by the raised-arm "Roman" salute.

Although Fini has publicly denounced anti-Semitism, the MSI-*Alleanza Nazionale* is anti-Semitic. As the fire came under pressure last autumn, the Labour Minister, one of Fini's placemen, blamed the currency turmoil on "New York Jews". At Fini's public meetings, the standard Italian anti-Semitic text on Freemasonry is prominently on sale.

Fini has proclaimed a commitment to privatisation while official MSI-*Alleanza Nazionale* economic thinking supports corporatist subsidies for their strongholds in southern Italy; but the core elements of Fini's Fascism are plain to all Italians. According to the political commentator Luciano Cantora, "This is not the first time there has been an attempt to make the Fascists respectable, and in this case the essential values at the heart of Fascism remain intact."

Fini most resembles Fascist politicians in his intense craving for international respectability. So this invitation is the biggest coup in his careful programme to win endorsement outside Italy as a mainstream political leader.

Along with Berlusconi, Fini continues to call for early elections, from which he hopes to emerge with a stronger share of the vote and a claim to be named prime minister. His London speech, due on February 15, will fall right in the middle of intense campaigning in Italy by Berlusconi and Fini for new elections, at a time when the rest of Europe hopes that the new Fini government can stabilise Italian politics and implement economic reform after the shocks of the past 12 months.

Never before in its history has Chatham House lent its prestige to such an extreme right-wing figure. It is not clear at what level the decision to invite Fini was taken. To be sure, Chatham House has drifted to the right under the impact of 15 years of Conservative government, and its bizarrely eclectic speakers' list suggests that speakers are chosen as much for their shock publicity effect as for a contribution to serious analysis of foreign affairs.

In the Commons last summer, the Foreign Secretary, Douglas Hurd, went out of his way to defend Fini's party, and the importance of dealing with it as an elected component of the Italian Government. In the complex search for allies in Europe, it is clear that Hurd saw the new coalition in Rome as a new right-wing partner against Franco-German domination in the EU. So did Hurd nudge Chatham House to endorse Fini?

Whatever the explanation, this blunder is all the more grotesque in the year we celebrate the anniversary of the defeat of Fascism. It should be withdrawn before a mistake becomes an international incident, shaming Britain in the eyes of the victims of Fascism and of those Jews, homosexuals, trade unionists and others in Italy who are terrified of the arrival of Fini in power in Rome. The author is Labour MP for Rotherham.

Lighting up time

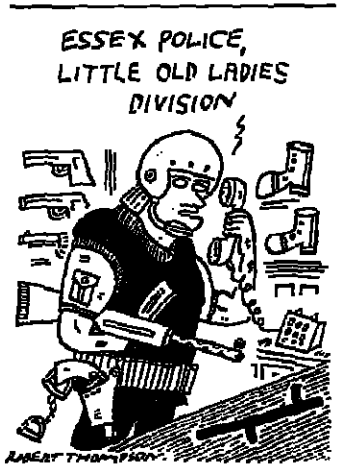
JESTMINSTER is brightening p. At dusk last night, a switch as flicked, sunglasses were donned and the four faces of the Big Ben clocktower were bathed in azzine eco-friendly beams. Concerned, like everyone else, at the size of their electricity bills, 17s on one of the less glamorous monuments have been examining ways to cut costs. And they claim to have discovered the seemingly impossible: brighter, cheaper lamps that should last 13 years at least, on something known as high-frequency induction.

Originally, the clock was illuminated by Victorian gas lamps, but in 1906 electricity was introduced, with ten 100-watt bulbs behind each face. "Big Ben is a beacon," says Ray owell, MP, chairman of the House of Commons Accommodation and Works Committee. "In the past it has always been too dim. Now we can show off one of our greatest historical landmarks in its historical splendour." It is intended that the new installation will save 3,500 a year off electricity and maintenance bills, but Powell claims that the switch-on itself "is not a grand affair. We can't afford it."

It pays to be polite. The journalist Alexander Chancellor's fine for drunken driving was reduced from £500 to £400 yesterday because, the judge told him, he had been very helpful to the arresting officers when stopped in Kensington after a Christmas party.

Handy lord

VISCOUNT COWDRAY will be missed by the polo world, but his death this week also robs kitchen



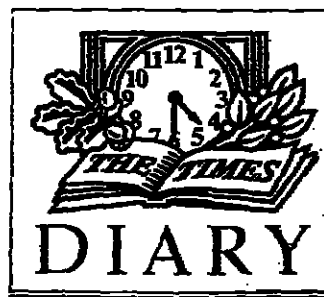
staff at his 60,000-acre Aberdeenshire estate of a man whose advice was readily sought at the stove. The most recent example of his culinary tips came at Christmas when the octogenarian peer turned up from Cowdray Park in Surrey.

When he arrived for breakfast in the morning he learnt that the cook, Christine Morrison, had broken her wrist and was struggling with boiled eggs. Cowdray, who lost his left arm in the retreat from Dunkirk, understood her plight only too well and rushed to her aid. "He was amazingly dexterous with his one hand," explains a retainer. "He could top an egg with one hand in a jiffy."

Roll 'em

DINING recently as guests in one of the capital's casinos, the Ritz Club, John and Norma Major were given an abrupt lesson in the draconian regulations endured by British gaming clubs.

Casinos are, by law, obliged to stop serving drinks at midnight, with half an hour's drinking up time. So at 12.30 precisely, the Prime Minister's unfinished glass of brandy was politely but firmly removed from the dinner table, in accordance with the curfew. With gambling continuing until



4am, the PM appeared surprised at the absurdity of the rule. He left with a note from the management, apologising if his evening was spoilt, but suggesting he might like to do something about it.

No cod

TWO OF Westminster's fishy rebels, Sir Richard Body and Rupert Allason, showed solidarity with disgruntled fishermen on Wednesday's *Nine O'Clock News* by munching their way through cod and chips.

The venue for their meal was The Laughing Halibut in Westminster, favourite fish-and-chip emporium of MPs and, increasingly, a refuge for piscine rebels. Sir Richard insists he is a regular. "We didn't just do it for the cameras. I am every morsel. Even if our fish did come from the North

Sea, the Spanish vessels would be there sooner or later."

Keep stumm

RECENT winners of the lottery will probably sympathise with the desire for anonymity expressed by winners back in the 18th century. A poster for the English State Lottery of 1786 is coming up for sale at Phillips, the auctioneers.

The lottery total offered was a vast £500,000. The poster lists previous winners simply as "a gentleman in Berkeley Square" or "a society of ladies and gentlemen from Cornhill". Tickets cost 6d, and entrants were assured politely of "the earliest intelligence sent of their success".

Huge fan

NORMA MAJOR's dress sense has seldom been called into question. Yet next month, her clothes allowance faces one of its sterner tests. She is expected among bidders at Sotheby's forthcoming sale of Dame Joan Sutherland's operatic costumes.

She has written an uninspiring introduction for the sale's brochure, in which she notes that Dame Joan finds the role of Bellini's *Norma* her most taxing — hardly surprising considering that



Stupendous: Dame Joan

the character sets fire to herself towards the end of the opera.

Lord Kagan, who died this week, was an extraordinarily ambitious chess player. So much so, that he had an eclectic selection of chess sets. "He always managed to find a chess set with obscure-looking pieces which his opponent couldn't recognise. That gave him a head start," says a regular combatant. "And if that didn't work he would sing loudly in Lithuanian, which would put anyone off."

P.H.S



REBELS IN ERROR

Yesterday's manifesto on Europe was clear but wrong

Courage and principles are two political qualities possessed in abundance by the rebel MPs who were deprived of the Tory whip late last year by John Major. Realism and tactical finesse are less developed faculties. The manifesto published yesterday by eight of the nine rebels was one of the clearest statements on European policy heard in Britain for 20 years. But its practical effects on European debate are unlikely to be constructive, either for Britain or for the Tory party, whose interests the rebels still claim to have at heart.

The main objections to the rebel manifesto are not that it looks like a further act of defiance against Mr Major and makes the task of bringing the dissenters back into the Tory fold more difficult. It remains as true as ever that the expulsion of nine MPs from the parliamentary party was the fault of the Prime Minister, ill advised by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the whips, not of the rebels themselves. Mr Major had no need to make the vote on EU budget contributions an issue of confidence and thereby to raise the stakes. The whole crisis was of the whips' own making and the rebels should not be blamed for refusing to be cowed into silence by their threats.

The real objection to the rebel manifesto lies not in its symbolism or its tactics, but in its contents. The eight proposals, when taken together, amount, in effect, to a call for outright withdrawal from the EU. In making such a call, the rebels have not only cut themselves off from the possibility of any serious influence over government policy. They have also misread public opinion, which is uncomfortable with the drift towards a federal Europe but would need much more serious provocation to contem-

plate complete withdrawal.

The rebels now risk discrediting the more moderate and constructive Tory Eurosceptics. As soon as the rebels are readmitted into the party, their manifesto will offer an easy target for Labour. Tony Blair will be able to parry justified attacks on his own naive European policies by claiming that the Tories have only united around a hidden agenda that would ultimately take Britain out of the EU.

Even the rebels themselves are not so deluded as to believe that their eight demands must be met before they take back the Tory whip. As Sir Teddy Taylor said yesterday, the manifesto is meant only as "a suggestion" and the immediate objective is only to start a serious debate.

A serious discussion of Britain's EU membership would, indeed, be welcome. The idea of withdrawing from the EU should not be considered taboo, either within the Tory party or in the country. As Norman Lamont has suggested, the pros and cons of EU membership are much more finely balanced than is now taken for granted. There is no reason to accept the simplistic view, all too prevalent in the Labour Party and much of the business community, that Britain is condemned by geography to follow whatever road to political and economic unification the continental countries might choose.

But to call for a debate on Britain's EU membership, of the kind that would inevitably result at the time of a referendum on monetary union or the inter-governmental conference, is very different from advocating withdrawal from the key EU institutions before such a debate has taken place and before the people have given their view.

DESPITE CHECHENIA

Western leaders must stand by Yeltsin

Douglas Hurd yesterday warned Andrei Kozirev, the Russian Foreign Minister, that British public opinion was becoming disgusted with Moscow's onslaught on Grozny. In Bonn, Helmut Kohl was forced on the defensive in the Bundestag and said that while he was proud to call President Yeltsin a friend, Russia was not doing enough to end the war. Warren Christopher has been telling Mr Kozirev that Mr Yeltsin's close relations with America are also in jeopardy. As the battle for Grozny reaches its climax, the West is looking at the toll the war is taking on the Russian leader and on their relations with him.

No one doubts that when the fighting is over, there will be a political slaughter in Moscow. The Russian leader will come under enormous pressure to exact a price for the bungling, wrong advice and incompetence. If he does nothing, his political weakness will be patent for his rivals to see; if he blames the military, however, he could only fuel the anger of the general staff, already deeply frustrated by steep budget and manpower cuts, the undermining of the armed forces' former privileged position and recent political and economic reform.

Mr Yeltsin will have to pay a very high price of his own if he is to re-establish his battered authority. The general staff, even if it forces through a coup against the Defence Minister, Pavel Grachev, will want a huge increase in military spending. The President's former democratic allies in the Duma will not return to his banner unless he can distance himself from the Chechnya campaign. The public, now suffering a new round of inflation as the rouble plunges, will hold Mr Yeltsin's Government responsible for the economic collapse that is likely to be compounded by its failure to secure a loan

from the International Monetary Fund. The wary advisers around the President, fearing for their future, will be unsure whether to turn on him and court his enemies or stick with the embattled leader.

Western statesmen have invested much in Mr Yeltsin. They have learnt not to underestimate a man whose explosions of energy have forced escape from many a political cul-de-sac. He is still seen as the best guarantor of political and economic reform. And, most cogently, they do not see any credible alternative to a leader who still stands the squabbling politicians around him. It is, as diplomats in Moscow are saying, too early to write him off.

In all assessments of a vulnerable foreign leader's domestic standing, the most important calculation must be how credible his opponents are. There are few other so-called Democrats who have the slightest chance in the coming presidential election. Grigori Yavlinsky comes top of the polls and heads the liberal Yabloko faction in the Duma, but he is not the stuff of nationwide appeal. Viktor Chernomyrdin, the Prime Minister, is still Pompidou to Yeltsin's de Gaulle, and must await his boss's departure. Few others are sufficiently known at home or abroad — except, ominously, the Communists and nationalists such as Vladimir Zhirinovskiy. It is precisely because these unstable men might top any poll next year that the West must continue support for a President who is the most reliable leader to control Russia's vast nuclear arsenal. Western statesmen may wish to play down this support at home while the television pictures show such carnage. They may wish to use their personal friendship to warn him of a foreign backlash. But it is not the time to abandon him, despite the Chechnya toll.

RESUME NORMAL SERVICE

Radio 4 should preserve its broadcast act of worship

Next month, Radio 4's *Morning Service* will go off the air for four weeks to be replaced by a discussion programme on "emotional issues common to human experience". This will be the second time that the BBC's most familiar religious programme has been cancelled to make way for *Were You There?*, a well-regarded series presented by the broadcaster Rosemary Hattill. Both programmes deserve a place in Radio 4's schedule. But it is deeply regrettable that *Morning Service* should now be regarded as an optional feature rather than a fixture.

To say so may appear pedantic. The BBC denies that the change of plan sounds the death-knell of *Morning Service*. But to the 1.3 million devotees of the programme, the decision to replace it for a month will appear thoughtless and disrespectful. It suggests a misunderstanding both of Radio 4's own cultural role and of the role which religious programming plays in the life of the nation.

Radio 4 listeners are the conservative core of the BBC's consumer constituency. As the campaign to save the channel's long-wave service demonstrated, they react fiercely to substantial change. That does not mean that Radio 4's output should be immutable. The success of programmes such as *The Moral Maze* has illustrated the value of intelligent innovation on an essentially traditionalist radio channel. But there is a difference between providing the soil for new ideas and uprooting a much-loved garden. Radio 4's Sunday morning fixtures — notably *Morning Service* and *The Archers* — are an institution. The station has done itself few favours in recent years by tinkering with its

schedule at this time of week. It should sink further only with the greatest of care.

Secondly, the decision to take *Morning Service* off the air, albeit temporarily, suggests a misconceived approach to religion on radio and television. It might be argued that a programme like *Were You There?* addresses spiritual issues in the same way as a formal religious service and is therefore a reasonable substitute. In fact, the two are quite different sorts of broadcast.

One answers the need in intelligent people for sophisticated discussion of religious, mystical and emotional issues, as do television programmes such as *Everyman* and *Heart of the Matter*. The other speaks to the human desire to share a collective act of worship, if only by listening to a radio or watching television. By tuning to *Morning Service*, listeners are given a sense of participation in a Christian ritual involving people all over the country.

It is often assumed that such programmes are outdated in a secular age that prefers its religion laced with doubt and debate. In fact, there is strong evidence that viewers and listeners continue to value broadcast services. BBC's *Songs of Praise*, for example, is regularly watched by more than five million people. A survey published last year by the Independent Television Commission suggested powerful support for the traditional "God slot". More people experience acts of worship through electronic media than by their presence in church. In *Morning Service*, Radio 4 has a core asset which should not be traded for faddishness or current trends.

West inconsistent in foreign affairs

From Professor Vladimir J. Konecni

Sir, In 1991, when the Yugoslav Government and Army, without firing a shot, tried in Slovenia to preserve the borders and the territorial integrity of a viable, legitimate, and for 70 years an internationally recognized country — Yugoslavia — the European Community and the United States did nothing positive.

On the contrary, led by Germany, they did everything in their power to dissolve Yugoslavia by quickly recognizing first Slovenia, then Croatia, then Bosnia and Herzegovina, then the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The present-day analogy would be for Germany to recognize Chechnya without consulting its allies and for the UN then to send troops to protect an "internationally recognized" country and create a "safe haven" in Grozny.

When the Algerian Government in 1992 cancelled elections which the Muslim fundamentalists were about to win, there was hardly a squeak heard in protest from the United States, let alone an invasion of *la Grenade* or Haiti to restore "democracy". And the West does not like Milosevic in Belgrade even though he has been twice democratically elected.

So there are "good" and "bad" attempts to preserve the territorial integrity of a country and "good" and "bad" winners of democratic elections, just as there are apparently "good Muslims" in Bosnia and the Gulf, and "bad Muslims" everywhere else. The answer to the apparent conundrum is that power and economic interests, not justice or international law, guide Western behavior.

Yours etc,
VLADIMIR J. KONECNI,
327 Shoemaker Lane,
Solana Beach, California 92075, USA.
January 16.

Tories and Europe

From Mr Tom King, MP for Bridgwater (Conservative), and others

Sir, In the light of the ongoing debate about the future developments of the European Community and Britain's role within it, the vast majority of Conservatives support a clear-headed and practical approach to securing what is in Britain's best interests.

They do want to be part of a Europe in which it is easy to travel and free to trade, but want to see less intervention in their day-to-day lives from Brussels. Few want more constitutional changes arising from next year's Intergovernmental Conference, and would support any move to block such changes. They want Britain to be a member of a Europe of nation states, not a superstate.

In short, they support the Government's negotiating position set out recently by the Prime Minister.

Yours etc,
TOM KING,
BOB DUNN,
ANTHONY DURANT,
DAVID EVANS,
ARCHIE HAMILTON,
PETER HODGSON,
DAVID HOWELL M. JOPLING,
JILL KNIGHT,
FERGUS MONTGOMERY,
JIM PAWSEY,
DONALD THOMPSON,
House of Commons,
January 19.

Mandel recalled

From Mr Nicholas Ogilthorpe

Sir, The gallant Georges Mandel was not "an obscure politician of the Third Republic" as Charles Bremner describes him in his report (January 7) on the recent rise to political prominence of Nicolas Sarkozy, but a remarkable and strong minister.

A First World War political adviser to "Tiger" Clemenceau at the most dangerous times, Mandel was later one of the few French politicians to understand the Nazi threat in its full horror, and to be utterly determined to resist.

Mandel accepted the office of Minister of the Interior on May 18, 1940, when France faced disaster. He kept his head and stiffened resistance as best he could, wanting to take it to Algeria and the French colonies, and was prevented from doing so only by treachery. On June 16, 1940, he refused an opportunity to escape with de Gaulle on the following day.

Imprisoned by the Vichy government, Mandel was murdered on Gestapo orders on July 7, 1944. His memory deserves the honour no doubt afforded to it by Mr Sarkozy.

Yours faithfully,
NICHOLAS OGILTHORPE,
15 Poplar Avenue,
Eaton, Norwich, Norfolk.
January 8.

Crowd-puller?

From Mr David Graney

Sir, As a BBCI viewer, I feel rather insulted to read (report January 18) that a period drama, *The Buccaneers*, can only be made "accessible" to people like me by the introduction of a "rape and a homosexual encounter".

Yours sincerely,
DAVID GRANEY,
Furlong House, High Street,
Stretton, Salisbury, Wiltshire.
January 18.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 071-782 5000

Conservation of listed buildings

From Mrs Nicholas Graham

Sir, Nobody should be surprised by the thought of fines, or threat of imprisonment, if "irreparable damage" is caused to a Grade II listed house (letters, January 2, 6, 11). What right has anyone to ruin our diminishing stock of 15th-century houses, or 19th-century houses, for that matter?

Supportive yelps will always be heard from those who flout the law, those who are too idle or too impatient to complete the simple forms provided by their local planning authority — a source which, in my experience, provides free and expert advice.

I am delighted to know that if in this Grade II house we start to demolish the porte cochère, install plastic windows, paint our stucco "day-glow" orange or pick-axe an original fireplace, the entire conservation section of Canterbury City Council "will be down on us like a ton of bricks", and quite right, too.

Few people are willing to restore a listed building unless they are secure in the knowledge that successive owners will be prevented from "Gormanim-ing" it.

Yours faithfully,
ANNE GRAHAM,
Petham House,
Petham, Canterbury, Kent.
January 11.

From Mr Anthony Wigram, FRCS

Sir, I believe that much more detailed work needs to be done over the listing of Grade II buildings, and the specific parts of those buildings which ought to be listed.

It may well be reasonable for the exterior of pleasant although unexceptional 17th and 18th-century buildings

to be protected; but the case for bureaucratic interference with alterations to interiors of merely vernacular interest is surely mistaken, particularly if such buildings cannot be put to reasonably beneficial use without modern kitchens, bathrooms, heating and insulation.

Yours faithfully,
ANTHONY WIGRAM,
Highfield House,
4 Woodfall Street, SW3.
January 10.

From Mr K. E. Willis

Sir, Assuming that it is right and proper to protect and conserve our architectural heritage, and that there is no point in making regulations if they are not to be enforced, is it not a fact that far too many buildings are listed and that many, though they may be properly listed, are too highly graded?

Many of the 700,000 currently listed buildings must be of questionable architectural and aesthetic merit — particularly at the Victorian and post-Victorian end of the scale, and yet their restoration, or even simple repair, is being made impossibly difficult because they are caught, for no sound reason, in the listed building net.

It was surely never the purpose of the Town and Country Planning Act to condemn sound and usable buildings to dereliction; but that could well be its effect unless the criteria for listing buildings are very carefully examined.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,
K. E. WILLIS,
(Managing Director),
Commercial Group Holdings,
2-16 High Street,
Margate, Kent.
January 9.

Horticultural library

From Mr John S. Mattock

Sir, It is precisely because the Lindley Library, the greatest horticultural library in the world, has outgrown its totally inadequate premises, Westminster that necessitates its rehousing (Sir Roy Strong's letter, January 14).

With the existing facilities and lack of space, only about one tenth of this priceless contribution to horticultural knowledge is ever easily available to visit and consult.

There are also vast quantities of very valuable paintings and memorabilia which rarely see the light of day. The collections of the Royal Horticultural Society are not the most flourishing of conditions to store them in, and the roof of the library leaks like a sieve.

Surely this library would be better accommodated in custom-built premises at Wisley in spacious surroundings with ample car parking, where a visit can be combined with a walk in very pleasant surroundings and a very superior restaurant is available.

Yours sincerely,
JOHN MATTOCK,
(Council member, Royal Horticultural Society, 1973-86),
14 Hill Rise,
Gidley Way, Horspath, Oxford.
January 16.

From Mr John Harris

Sir, Sir Roy Strong's plea for the retention of the Lindley Library in London is a reminder of the disaster that has befallen the National Monuments Record of the Royal Commission on

Historical Monuments since its removal in May 1994 to Swindon. It has become "user-unfriendly".

I recently made inquiries of those who regularly used this great collection of architectural photographs when in London. Out of 28 only one has been to Swindon. A day's consultation from London must include the £39 standard return rail fare. There are now constant complaints as to the inadequacy of communication from a distance, because the eyes of the NMR staff cannot be a substitute for those of the user. The National Monuments Record will wither.

I believe that the Lindley Library will similarly wither. To get to Wisley by public transport requires train, bus and a walk.

If the Council of the Royal Horticultural Society takes this decision, it will be tantamount to closing the library down.

Yours sincerely,
JOHN HARRIS,
16 Limerston Street, SW10.
January 14.

From Mr Edward W. Petts

Sir, Sir Roy Strong is causing quite unnecessary alarm.

I have no doubt that the scholars from all over the world who wish to visit the Lindley Library will manage to join the 681,164 visitors who made the "major expedition" to Wisley Gardens in 1993.

Yours faithfully,
EDWARD W. PETTS,
29 Crichton Road,
Carshalton Beches, Surrey.
January 14.

Clause Four debate

From Mr R. L. Sturch

Sir, Whether the Labour Party's Clause Four should be changed or not, those who wish to retain it are not "living in the past" (headline, January 11). The clause was not intended as a response to the conditions of 1918, but as a target for the (possibly distant) future; and it is if anything the future that its supporters are living in.

Yours truly,
R. L. STURCH,
3 The Rise, Islip,
Kidlington, Oxfordshire.

From the Editor of Tribune

Sir, Your correspondents, Jill Sherman and Arthur Leadley, report (January 11) that Labour Party sources had told them that "much of the Defend

Clause Four campaign is being run out of Tribune offices".

This claim is wrong. While *Tribune* has taken a strong editorial line on the issue, as might be expected of a socialist newspaper, the campaign for Clause Four is not being run from these offices. We lack the resources to do so, apart from anything else. Indeed *Tribune* has been the only newspaper to afford the protagonists from all sides of the argument space for their views. That we will continue to do.

But *Tribune* did argue from the beginning that this was an unnecessary debate which would divide the party. It looks as though we were right.

Yours sincerely,
MARK SEDDON,
Editor, *Tribune*,
308 Gray's Inn Road, WC1.

Corruption in politics

From Lord Blake, FBA

Sir, May I expand on my remark, which you quote from my evidence to the Nolan committee (report, January 18, earlier editions), that "it would be difficult to write an interesting book on corruption in Britain between 1895 and 1995".

I may have expressed myself badly. I was referring to Professor Geoffrey Searle's authoritative book, *Corruption in British Politics 1895-1930*, and I meant that it would be difficult to write a similar book on the periods 1860-95 or 1930-65, because there is nothing much to write about.

The years dealt with by Professor Searle were exceptional — till recently.

Yours faithfully,
BLAKE,
Riverview House, Brundall, Norwich.

Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be faxed to 071-782 5046.

Furore over live animal exports

From Mr Chaim Berman

Sir, It seems to me that an unholy alliance has emerged between environmentalists and the animal lobby to destroy British farming.

The former argue that the farmer is the enemy of the earth, and farming an assault on nature, and they would ideally like to see the British countryside revert to wilderness.

The latter has in the meantime been spreading the idea that all movement of livestock is cruel. It is no longer a matter of calves in crates. Sheep transports are also being stopped. At this rate it will soon be impossible for farmers to move livestock to market.

I don't know which is the more disturbing, the excesses of the animal lobby or the quiescence of the farmers.

Yours faithfully,
CHAIM BERMAN,
c/o Aitken, Stone & Wylie Ltd,
29 Fernshaw Road, SW10.
January 18.

From Mr David Gibbon

Sir, Three cheers for the citizens of Brightlingsea (report, January 19).

The live transport of farm animals has been exposed by the RSPCA and others as a most viciously callous trade but it is just the tip of the iceberg. Veal production is only one outrageous example. Turkey-rearing and intensive egg production both involve cruelty that, if it were applied to budgies, would lead to prison sentences. If dogs were treated as pigs are, it would cause a public uproar.

I am not surprised that ordinary people in their thousands have joined the protests against the live transport of animals. The growing availability of vegetarian food in the supermarkets makes it clear that more and more people are voting with their shopping baskets too.

We should be proud that we have an ethical movement in which the people of Britain are leading the world.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID GIBBON,
145 Mayfield Road, Edinburgh 9.
January 19.

From Mr Paul Caswell

Sir, The present furore over animal exports, like the earlier campaign against the community charge, points to a defect in our constitutional arrangements. The "one-cause" group sees no legitimate means of getting its way, so it turns to public demonstrations, wasting police time and risking violent elements getting their head.

We may not wish to see in this country referendums becoming as commonplace as in Switzerland and California. But perhaps a legal specification for independently supervised and privately financed advisory referendums might take the steam out of some of these situations.

They could be supervised by a body such as the Electoral Reform Society with a minimum 25 per cent poll in each of at least three quarters of the Westminster constituencies. If a two thirds majority were gained, then the law might require that Parliament hold a full debate.

Some such legitimised channel is needed now that our MPs are so well-whipped.

Yours sincerely,
PAUL CASWELL,
57 Hanson Drive, Fowey, Cornwall.
January 16.

Compulsory purchase

From the Managing Director of Thames Water

Sir, Your report (January 17) on the landowner who claims he was "exploited" by our predecessors, the Metropolitan Water Board, omitted to say that his case was carefully reviewed by the local ombudsman in 1988, who cleared the then water authority of accusations of administrative error and unreasonableness.

It is no surprise to us — though it may be to others — that the Country Landowners' Association had to cite a 30-year-old case in support of its argument. Today, compulsory purchase orders are virtually unknown in this country.

Yours sincerely,
W. J. ALEXANDER,
Managing Director,
Thames Water Utilities,
Nugent House,
Vestern Road, Reading, Berkshire.

A sour taste

From Mr P. M. B. Savage

Sir, Surely Joyce Grenfell wins the prize for restraint horror stories (letters, January 11, 13): she was sitting within earshot of the kitchen door and heard one waiter, as he was going out, say to another: "She's eaten it".

Yours faithfully,
PATRICK SAVAGE,
Aynhoe Park,
Nr Banbury, Oxfordshire.

From Mr David L. Medd

Sir, Many years ago, in the restaurant in Ham House, Richmond, I asked if the apple tart on the menu was cold. The reply of the waitress was: "Nearly".

Yours faithfully,
DAVID L. MEDD,
5 Pennyfathers Lane, Harmer Green,
Wetwyn, Hertfordshire.

هذا من الاعلى

committed execution in a girls' seminary, where several pupils were killed. Pont St Michel is upwards of 10,000 schiuti, of 30 inches each, from the battery. To a distant observer from one of the batteries Paris does not seem much injured, but a face destroyed by rock-marks does not reveal its ugliness as long way off. As yet there is no symptom that the Council of Generals has made any modifications in the defence. To-day there was unusual silence in the afternoon. Something was observed to be on fire in the Crown Prince Redoubt, over by Ville d'Avray, but I could not ascertain if it was caused by a French shell or by accident inside. There is still smoke rising at times from Fort Issy. Some of the fires in the suburbs may be caused by the French clearing away useless houses to open the front of the *enclave*. French shells set fire to houses in Châtillon and Clamart on the 13th, but they were extinguished without difficulty. That night bells were heard ringing in the city in all the churches, and a great movement of carts and of trains on the railroad, which has not ceased running, was heard. At 10 o'clock the sound of a heavy cannonade, musketry, and mitrailleuses came from the front. The firing was not so much made as usual. This coincided with the sortie in Clamart. The weather is still most bitter, and at night there is a dense fog.



INFOTECH 31-34

Fun and games with the latest interactive CDs



ARTS 35-37

Portrait of the woman Man Ray pictured



SPORT 38-44

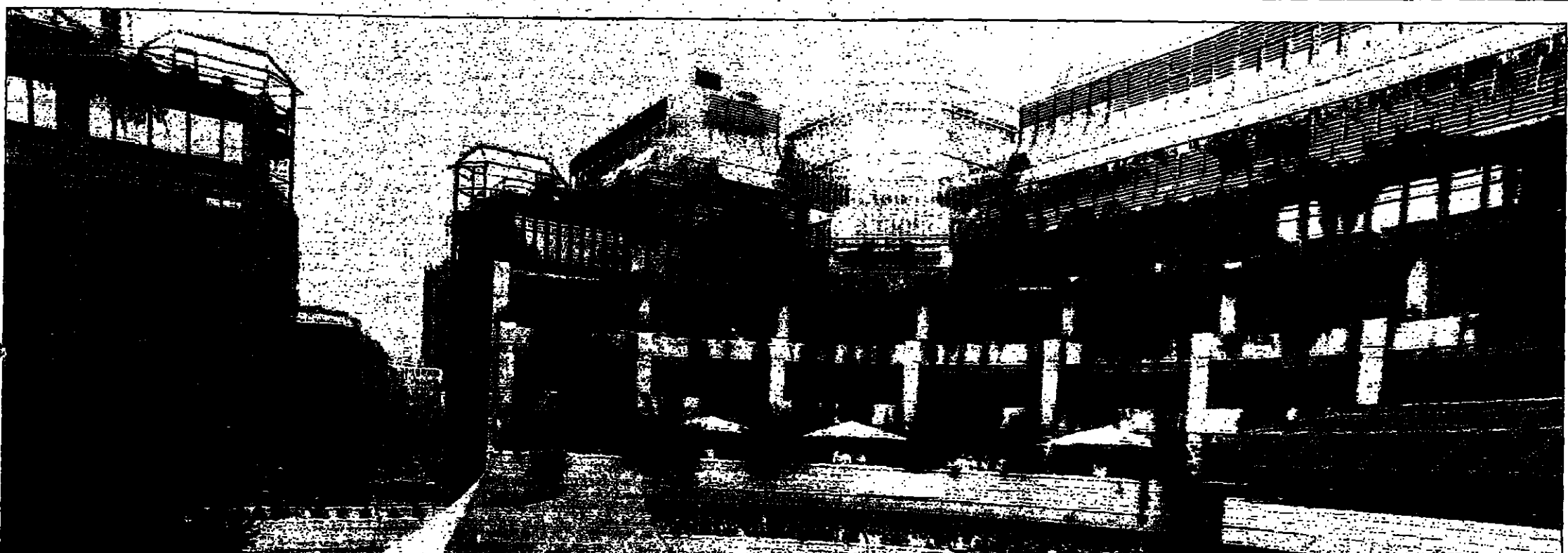
Bates wilts in the heat of battle

TELEVISION AND RADIO
Page 42, 43

THE TIMES

BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

FRIDAY JANUARY 20 1995



The £1 billion prize: Broadgate, the 1 million sq ft office and retail development at Liverpool Street in the City, built in a joint venture between Stanhope Properties and Rosehaugh, is now within British Land's grasp

Higher rates take a step nearer

BY JANET BUSH

BUOYANT Christmas spending on the high street coupled with figures showing higher inflation in industry and retailing yesterday shortened the odds on a further rise in base rates during the next two months.

Retail sales rose 0.5 per cent in December, having been flat in October and November, says the Central Statistical Office. December's rise pushed annual growth in retail sales up to 3.8 per cent, against 2.6 per cent in November.

The City had been expecting a more modest rise in sales volumes in December, of 0.3 per cent. Taking yesterday's figures with the unexpected jump in retail price inflation last month and this week's figures showing slightly disappointing rises in factory gate prices, economists were convinced that the case for a base rate rise before the end of March is much stronger.

The Chancellor and the

GROUP of Seven finance ministers and central bank governors are to meet in Toronto on February 3 and 4 and are likely to discuss recent turbulence in the financial markets following the collapse of the Mexican peso. Paul Martin, Canadian Finance Minister, said that the G7 would review global economic conditions, but he gave no details. There have been rumours that a G7 meeting was to be convened for the past two weeks as bond and currency markets have been hard hit by turbulence.

Governor of the Bank of England next meet to discuss interest rates on February 2 and many in the City are expecting another move in rates. Key to these expectations will be next week's preliminary figures for fourth-quarter gross domestic product. If these show that growth has been holding up near to the recent 4 per cent quarterly levels, speculation of higher rates is likely to intensify.

Some economists said that the trend in sales volumes remains sluggish in spite of December's figures and suggested that the authorities may decide to wait until their March meeting, and for January's prices and sales figures, given that December is a volatile statistical month. Sales in the last three months of last year were up only 0.5 per cent compared with the previous three months. Average quarter-on-quarter gains in 1993 were 1.4 per cent, says Salomon Brothers.

However, other economists said that the acute price sensitivity of consumers that has underpinned the spectacular inflation performance seen during the recovery may have started to wane. Sales volumes put in a healthy rise in spite of higher prices.

Kevin Darlington, of Hoare Govett, said: "This week's RPI

figures suggested that the period of heavy discounting on the high street may have come to an end. The sales figures imply that consumers may be willing to spend their money even without the lure of such price cuts."

Sales of household goods rose 1.8 per cent in the three months to December, compared with the previous three months. Gains in sales were across the board except for other "non-food" outlets. Smaller stores are finding it difficult to compete on price.

Richard Brown, Deputy Director-General of the British Chambers of Commerce, welcomed the overall sales figures: "Much of this improvement has occurred through fierce discounting, price cuts and aggressive selling." Interest free credit, an effective price cut, is not reflected in the retail prices index, which may, therefore, be overstating inflation.

Christmas late, page 27

Rivals of Halifax leave rates alone

BY ANNE ASHWORTH
PERSONAL FINANCE EDITOR

LENDERS have drawn battle lines in the fight for mortgage market share. The Abbey National and the Cheltenham & Gloucester yesterday announced that they have no current plans to follow the Halifax, which has raised its loan rate 0.25 per cent, to 8.35 per cent for new borrowers and will do so for existing customers from February 1.

Only two leading societies have raised their rates. The Nationwide is moving to 8.44 per cent, an increase of 0.30 per cent, the National Provincial to 8.45 per cent, a rise of 0.36 per cent.

Others are hanging fire, while the Woolwich is expected to make an announcement today.

Andrew Longhurst, chief executive of the C&G, said there was no reason to raise its rate "at the present time". The society will review the position if there are further base rate rises. The Abbey said that it was reluctant to raise rates but was keeping a close watch, bearing in mind the interests of its 10 million savers.

The Halifax's decision to limit the increase puts the society on a very competitive footing with smaller societies who have been jostling for share in a sluggish market. Those smaller lenders who adjusted their rates in the wake of December's 0.50 per cent base rate rise to 6.25 per cent chose to move their mortgage rates to about 8.50 per cent. The Northern Rock opted for 8.54 per cent.

Mike Blackburn, chief executive of the Halifax, said: "By limiting the increase to 0.25 per cent, we hope to minimise the impact on our borrowers and the housing market generally." But the society believes further rises are inevitable and has forecast a rate of 9 per cent by Christmas.

The Halifax has 1.86 million borrowers, whose consent will be required for the merger.

Home Loans battle, page 25

British Land buys Stanhope Properties

BY CARL MORTISHED

BRITISH LAND has emerged victorious in the first stage of its battle to acquire the £1 billion Broadgate Properties, with a recommended takeover of Stanhope Properties, owner of a half share in the prestigious City development.

It is offering 3p a share for the remainder of Stanhope, worth £2.5 million, while the Stanhope banking syndicate, owed £148 million, has agreed to accept £122 million, or 82.4p in the pound, in repayment.

Stanhope shareholders are being offered an alternative of 2.7p in British Land shares. British Land intends to finance the takeover with a share issue. Brokers were speculating that British Land would launch a £125 million convertible issue prior to March 31, the deadline to repay Stanhope's bankers.

John Riblat, British Land's chairman, said friendly discussions had taken place with KPMG Peat Marwick, the receiver of Rosehaugh, which controls the other half of Broadgate Properties. The Broadgate and Ludgate developments are financed with a £770 million loan and analysts think British Land's gearing could soar to 145 per cent if it took over Rosehaugh's stake.

The deal ends a 3-year fight by Stanhope and its advisers to keep the heavily indebted company afloat and spells defeat for PostTel and Alastair Ross Goobey, its chief. The post office pension fund launched a rival Broadgate bid after British Land had gained 29 per cent of Stanhope.

PostTel was ultimately defeated by the tenuous joint venture agreement put in place by Godfrey Bradman, former boss of Rosehaugh. PostTel's offer of up to £120 million for the Rosehaugh stake was recommended by the receiver to the Rosehaugh banking syndicate. However, pre-emption rights under the joint venture prevented PostTel from doing a deal without securing control of Stanhope at the same time, where British Land blocked the way.

British Land intends to defray the cost of its bid for

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET		
FT-SE 100	3028.6	(-26.3)
Yield	4.26%	
FT-SE All share	1503.00	(-10.85)
Nikkei	19075.74	(-147.57)
New York		
Dow Jones	3901.39	(-27.59)
S&P Composite	467.73	(-1.98)
US RATE		
Federal Funds	5 1/8%	(5%)
Long Bond	8 3/8%	(8 1/2%)
Yield	7.80%	(7.75%)
LONDON MONEY		
3-month Interbank	6 1/4%	(6 1/4%)
Libor 6m	10 1/2%	(10 1/2%)
Future (Mar)	10 1/2%	(10 1/2%)
STERLING		
New York	1.5755	(1.5693)
London		
DM	1.5755	(1.5701)
FF	2.3501	(2.4027)
FF	3.3000	(3.3010)
SP	2.0212	(2.0240)
Yen	156.08	(155.23)
S Index	70.9	(70.5)
DOLLAR		
London		
DM	1.5220	(1.5348)
FF	2.2735	(2.3025)
SP	1.2619	(1.2514)
Yen	98.45	(99.62)
S Index	62.9	(62.9)
Tokyo close Yen	99.78	
MONTH SEA OIL		
Brent 15-day (Apr)	\$16.65	(\$16.75)
GOLD		
London close	\$382.75	(\$383.05)
* denotes midday trading price		

Saatchi issues \$50m writ

By MARTIN WALLER
DEPUTY CITY EDITOR

SAATCHI & SAATCHI, the strife-ridden advertising combine, has wheeled out its biggest gun yet in its battle against defecting executives, a \$50 million New York court writ.

The target for this legal blunderbuss is Bill Muirhead, former head of US operations for the group's Saatchi & Saatchi World Wide agency and one of the so-called "three amigos" who quit last week in protest at the sacking of Maurice Saatchi, the group's founder.

All four men are the target of writs in Britain alleging breach of their contracts with the company, but Mr Muirhead's New York base permits Saatchi & Saatchi to broaden the legal battle to the American courts.

The writ against Mr Muirhead, in the Supreme Court of the State of New York, was served in Britain, where he is currently resident and thought to be talking to Mr Saatchi about the latter's plans for a new agency.

It alleges breach of contract and misappropriation of confidential information. Mr Muirhead said the action would be "vigorously defended". He added: "The figure of \$50 million claimant... has no basis and seems designed only to attract news headlines and to intimidate me."

MPs to scrutinise defence industry

By ROSS TIEMAN, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

MEMBERS of two influential all-party Commons select committees are to mount a joint inquiry into defence procurement in Britain.

The combined hearings by the Defence and the Trade and Industry committees will bring government policy and company strategies under scrutiny at a time when the defence industry, Britain's biggest, faces unprecedented pressures for pan-European rationalisation.

Malcolm Rifkind, the Defence Secretary, and Roger Freeman, the Procurement Minister, will be obliged for the first time to justify the impact of their decisions and strategy on Britain's industrial base and military capability. Senior industrialists from companies such as British Aerospace, GEC and Vickers will also be called to give evidence.

This is believed to be the first joint inquiry since the system of select committees was established in Parliament in 1979. Ministers have always maintained that each committee should scrutinise the work of individual government departments. The inquiry may take the form of a joint sub-committee of the two select committees.

All sides are understood to have agreed in principle to a joint inquiry because of the far-reaching impact of defence equipment purchases. Defence manufacturing accounts for 9 per cent of GDP and 400,000 jobs.

Comrades in arms, page 27

Small firms undercharged by the taxman

COMPANY directors and small businesses are being undercharged on their tax returns by £100 million a year, according to a report published by MPs yesterday (Michael Dwyer writes).

An estimated 1.4 million company directors, and some five million self-employed plumbers, retailers and other small businesses, will now face increased tax demands.

Most of the £100 million shortfall is attributable to errors by Inland Revenue tax assessment officials, the Commons Public Accounts Committee said.

A separate report by the National Audit Office found that 70 per cent of Schedule D taxpayers (self-employed), and some 25 per cent of Schedule E taxpayers (company directors) received one or more assessments.

Naafi opens new front in finance war

By LIZ DOLAN

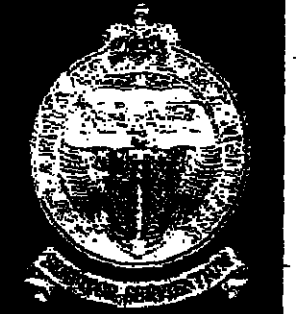
THE NAVY, Army and Air Force Institutes, known to every Tommy, Dick and Jack Tar as the Naafi, is gunning for civilians. After the Government's decision to axe one third of its traditional customer base, Naafi Financial Services is, for the first time, marching on civvy street with two new investment funds, appropriately dubbed Trafalgar and Spearhead.

Under a banner headline, The Investment Minefield and How to Avoid It, the marketing literature says: "Investment inertia is the enemy of investors for whom active investment management should produce greater returns in the medium to long term."

But strongarm tactics will not be used. There are no proposals to send platoons of financial press-gangs out into suburban streets, forcing unwilling investors to sign up for the duration.

The plans will be marketed by staff with non-military backgrounds who promise to sell only to consenting members of the public, as well as to service personnel, the organisers say.

Trafalgar is a stay-at-home medium risk plan invested



mainly in UK blue chips. Spearhead, aimed at the more adventurous investor, will concentrate on overseas funds because. Investment Resources of Cambridge, the fund manager, says: "Concentrating on the UK stock market costs you a world of opportunity."

The richer pickings on overseas markets more than outweigh any exchange rate risks, reckons IRC's gung-ho managing director, David Charles of IRC. The Naafi appears to have missed out itself on these opportunities. It reported an exchange rate loss of £815,000 in the year to April 30, compared with £16,000 previously. But this is apparently caused by the strength of the mark, just one example of the volatile nature of Naafi finances in the face of world events.

Trafalgar and Spearhead will be advertised in the military and conventional press from early February. There will also be a direct mail campaign targeting former armed forces officers and "high net worth" individuals.

The Naafi, which is not part of the Ministry of Defence, is a non-profit-making operation.

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Nearly half of small firms pay under £4 an hour

By GRAHAM SEARJANT
FINANCIAL EDITOR

NEARLY half of small businesses employ staff at less than £4 an hour, a possible starting point for a national minimum wage, according to a NatWest/Small Business Research Trust survey.

Of more than 1,000 firms surveyed with turnover below £1 million a year, 48 per cent said that they had staff earning less than £4 an hour. This rises to 70 per cent among firms in the retail trade, and to almost 85 per cent among small catering and restaurant firms. Larger firms in the sample were likelier to have low-

paid workers. Of businesses employing 50 or more staff, 70 per cent had at least one worker on a lower pay rate. Among smaller firms, many owners working long hours thought that they earned less than £4 an hour, too.

The £4 rate is roughly half median male earnings for a 40-hour week and the figure most widely canvassed as the starting point for any national minimum wage. This was the target for the Labour Party until it dropped its commitment to a figure. Informally, Labour Party thinking is now shifting towards a lower figure, possibly as little as £3.

The NatWest survey supports the claim by

minimum wage campaigners that use of part-time workers encourages extremely low pay insufficient to support a family. The more part-time workers that firms in the survey had, the greater the proportion of staff on rates below £4. Not surprisingly, given the dominance of women in part-time jobs, two-thirds of staff earning below that rate were women.

The Government argues that most of the people who would be affected by a minimum wage would be women who want part-time work and are not the sole earners in their family. Imposing a minimum would therefore cut job opportunities with little benefit. It is not clear

how far job opportunities would be cut. Although 70 per cent of owners and managers opposed a statutory minimum, a lower 60 per cent of those who would be affected by a £4 minimum thought they would cut employment.

Ian Peters, head of NatWest's small business services, said: "Many business owners and managers say they would be able to increase wages if their UK competitors were forced to pay a minimum wage. However, a number of businesses made it clear that, with competition from abroad, imposing a minimum wage in the UK would make them uncompetitive."

Reinsurer ready for battle with its takeover team

By SARAH BAGNALL, INSURANCE CORRESPONDENT

A DUTCH reinsurer's legal action claiming damages of £375 million from Swiss Bank Corporation, Ernst & Young and Bacon & Woodrow will begin in the High Court on Monday.

The case centres on the £122 million takeover by Nederlandse Reassurantie Groep (NRG) of Victory Reinsurance from Legal & General in 1990. The three City firms advised NRG on the deal.

Bill Dikland, NRG chairman, said: "This case will highlight a critical issue in the

international financial market place. What is the extent of the responsibility undertaken by banks and other professional advisers when employed to advise on mergers and acquisitions?"

NRG alleges that Ernst & Young and Bacon & Woodrow failed to discover the extent of Victory's exposure to losses emanating from spiral reinsurance business. It later emerged that Victory was significantly under-reserved for a string of events, such as the Exxon Valdez oil spill,

Hurricane Hugo, and storms in October 1987 and January 1990.

NRG alleges that if SBC's investment banking arm had "competently advised" the group, it would not have gone ahead with the acquisition.

Mr Dikland said: "NRG employed advisers to guide it in the acquisition process. NRG would not have proceeded with the transaction if it had been warned about the extent of the potential losses on Victory's marine and aviation account."

All the defendants reject the claims. E&Y said that it was satisfied that its work was not negligent and promised to defend the action vigorously. A spokesman said: "This is yet another instance of what has turned out to be a bad investment decision when the investor is now attempting to recoup his losses from his professional advisers."

Duncan Ferguson, senior partner of Bacon & Woodrow, said that it firmly rejected NRG's claim and said that the company was one of world's leading international insurers at the time of the bid. He said: "This is the first dispute of this kind which Bacon & Woodrow has had in its 70-year history. As actuaries, we pride ourselves in the quality and professionalism of our specialist work."

SBC denies that its advice was deficient in any way. According to NRG, the defendants have taken separate proceedings, arguing that if the judge rules against them, the two other defendants are also liable. The case is expected to last six months.



John Thornton plans to try soft drinks to combat chocolate meltdown in the summer

Staff at two banks in pay strike ballot

By PATRICIA TEHAN, BANKING CORRESPONDENT

THOUSANDS of staff at Yorkshire Bank and Clydesdale Bank are to be balloted on a series of one-day strikes after pay talks broke down.

About 9,500 bank workers at Yorkshire, in Leeds, and Glasgow's Clydesdale, which are owned by National Australia Bank, will vote on industrial action before the end of January. Strikes could start next month.

Keith Brooks, assistant secretary at Biffa, the banking and finance union, described the pay offers from Yorkshire and Clydesdale as derisory.

Yorkshire is offering an average pay rise of 4.4 per cent, linked to performance, to replace a system that gave staff an incremental pay rise

and an annual rise. It is also offering a bonus pot of £3.2 million, equivalent to an average 4 per cent of pay. But Mr Brooks said the bank had abolished its profit share scheme and the new bonus scheme was "ludicrous".

Hugh Roberts, Biffa negotiating officer, said Clydesdale's offer was equivalent to an average 2.5 per cent and would be conditional on accepting new flexible working hours.

A Yorkshire Bank spokesman said: "We feel our pay offer compares extremely favourably, and in some cases exceeds, pay settlements agreed by the union with our competitors." He was surprised by the union's reaction.

Rolls-Royce axes 600 jobs

By ROSS TIEMAN, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

UNIONS and workers reacted with anger yesterday after Rolls-Royce announced plans to close its Scottish aero-engine design centre at East Kilbride, with the loss of 600 jobs.

Work will be concentrated at the company's Derby and Bristol aero-engine manufacturing sites.

A Rolls-Royce spokesman said the company needed fewer design engineers because of the completion of the Trent engine development programme, and efficiency gains through computerisation of

design work. With more than 4,500 engineers remaining, the spokesman added, "there will be sufficient capability to cover all present and future engineering programmes".

The company said cost reductions were necessary to maintain competitiveness. Both Rolls's two big American rivals, General Electric and Pratt & Whitney, are engaged in aggressive cost-cutting programmes.

However, employees at East Kilbride accused Rolls of preferring English workers over their Scots colleagues. One

Steve Watson, said: "There is plenty work in that factory to keep us going. This is simply a case of choosing the English over the Scots."

Larry Brooke, national officer for the MSF technical union, said the closure would have a grave impact on East Kilbride, "where jobs are few and far between". He called for government action to support the aerospace industry.

Rolls said the job losses will begin in May, and the entire redundancy programme will be completed by the year end. Up to 100 employees may be

offered the opportunity to transfer to Derby or Bristol. Others may be invited to work for other Rolls businesses in Scotland.

A Rolls spokesman dismissed any suggestion that his company lacked commitment to Scotland.

The English sites were better equipped, and in the case of Derby, co-located with test facilities, he said.

The East Kilbride design centre, by contrast, is located alongside Rolls's main United Kingdom aero-engine overhaul centre, which will continue to employ 1,000.

Thornton's customers buy cheaper

By SUSAN GULCHRIST

BRITAIN'S chocoholics went downmarket during the Christmas period, according to Thornton's, the chocolate manufacturer and retailer.

John Thornton, chairman, said the same number of customers came through the doors, but bought cheaper chocolates. While overall sales in the UK rose 5.5 per cent in the four-week Christmas period, like-for-like sales fell 12 per cent.

Mr Thornton admitted the group's advertising campaign, which encouraged buying loose rather than boxed chocolates, was partly to blame. "It is disappointing, but it is a one-off blip," he said.

Total group sales for the 28 weeks to January 7 increased 2 per cent to £57.6 million, with sales from the UK rising almost 3 per cent. Mr Thornton said a strong autumn offset a weak period during the hot summer. The group has made attempts to move into areas such as ice cream to counteract the negative effect of hot weather on chocolate sales, but it has still failed to find a worthy substitute. An expansion into the soft drinks market is planned for next year.

Tempus, page 26

Archer's resignation raises old questions

MICHAEL HESELTINE was pressed yesterday to make a Commons statement after the disclosure that Mary Archer, wife of Lord Archer of Weston-super-Mare, is to resign from the board of Anglia Television. The President of the Board of Trade was urged to give details of his department's investigation into Lord Archer's involvement in a share sale days before Anglia was taken over by M&L, the media group. Lord Archer was investigated for alleged insider dealing by the Department of Trade and Industry, but Mr Heseltine said there were no grounds for action to be taken against the former Conservative Party deputy chairman.

After the revelation in *The Times* yesterday that Dr Archer was standing down after eight years as a non-executive director of Anglia, Angela Eagle, Labour MP for Wallasey, pressed Tony Newton, Leader of the Commons, for further information about the share deal. She called for a DTI statement "in the light of this new information".

BCCI ruling delayed

A LUXEMBOURG court has delayed until January 31 a decision on whether to approve a \$1.8 billion compensation package from the Abu Dhabi authorities for creditors of the collapsed Bank of Credit and Commerce International. The deal, negotiated by the liquidators, Touche Ross, and the Abu Dhabi, the majority shareholders, has been approved by courts in England and the Cayman Islands. The bank's liquidators had hoped for Luxembourg's ruling last week, but it has been delayed after a court-appointed liquidator said that a solicitor for Abu Dhabi had erased computer records in 1992.

Lasmo in \$29.5m sale

LASMO, the oil exploration company, has sold its 8.75 per cent interest in a production-sharing contract in Indonesia to Minor Resources for \$29.5 million in cash. Lasmo is selling its entitlement to an estimated 5,000 barrels a day under the Kakap PSC, which comprises two existing fields and two new fields in the West Natuna Sea. In addition, Minor will fund the \$6 million cost of drilling a 12,000 ft well in the adjacent Lasmo-owned Cumi Cumi PSC and Lasmo will grant Minor a half share. Lasmo said it "didn't want to drill without funding".

Tempus, page 26

Bankers Trust declines

BANKERS Trust, which is at the centre of controversy over several client investments in derivatives that turned sour last year, reported sharply lower earnings for the fourth quarter. Bankers Trust earned \$101 million, or \$1.19 a share, in the quarter, down from \$279 million, or \$3.26, a year ago, which included a record \$449 million of trading revenue. For the full year, the bank earned \$615 million, or \$7.17 a share, down from \$995 million, or \$11.51 a share, in 1993, when net earnings were reduced by \$95 million due to an accounting change. Bankers Trust has been sued by several clients.

Coffee export curb likely

COFFEE exporting nations opened talks in London on measures to maintain prevailing firm prices. Delegates said the Association of Coffee Producing Countries (ACPC) was likely to support a curb on exports. The talks bring together the 20 producers of about 85 per cent of world exports, including Brazil, the biggest. The ACPC last met in September, when prices had quadrupled to \$4.140 a tonne after frosts followed by drought in Brazil. But prices are now below \$3,000 a tonne in a market that thinks supply may be more generous than had been supposed.

Aga to sell Avesta stake

AGA, the Swedish industrial gases group, has disclosed it is selling its 7.2 per cent stake in Avesta Sheffield, the Anglo-Swedish steel company in which British Steel (BS) holds a stake of almost 50 per cent. The Aga shares will be sold to Swedish and foreign investors for about 900 million kronor (£77 million), the company said, giving the vendor a capital gain of about 600 million kronor (£51 million). In September, BS paid about £85 million for an additional 9.9 per cent stake in Avesta to bring its holdings to 49.9 per cent. BS said then it had no intention of making an offer for the rest of Avesta.

Neotronics cuts final

NEOTRONICS Technology, the electronics company that pioneered the development of the Electronic NOSE gas detection system, has cut the total dividend to 1.7p from 2.6p after suffering a profit decline to £1.08 million before tax (£2.33 million) in the year to the end of September. The final, payable on March 3, is cut to 0.85p from 1.75p. Profits were affected adversely by a £355,000 charge against development and marketing costs associated with the NOSE. The company said it had laid the foundations for improved future sales and profit performance.

Costain disposal

THE first phase of Costain's disposal programme was announced yesterday with sell-offs, totalling £63.5 million, in the US of a substantial part of its coal and mining interests. The company said in September that it plans to sell its US coal interests and to concentrate its efforts and resources developing its worldwide engineering and construction activities. It announced the sale yesterday of its 80 per cent stake in the Dolet Hills mining venture together with several other peripheral coal mining businesses. The Dolet Hills business has been sold to a subsidiary of Philipp Holzmann.

AIM maintains interim

PRE-TAX profits at AIM Group, the manufacturer of aircraft interiors, collapsed to £18,000 from £1.19 million in the half-year to October 31 as a result of a decision to maintain capacity in the face of a sharp decline in production. AIM warned that full-year profits would fall short of the previous year's £1 million before tax, in spite of an anticipated increase in production in the second half. But prospects for next year were better, and the company is maintaining the 1.5p interim, to be paid on April 13, uncovered by earnings per share of 0.7p, down from 5.4p previously.

Wall St broker guilty of hiring stand-in for jury service

FROM SEAN MAC CARTHAIGH
IN NEW YORK

Judgment day for reluctant juror

A TOP Wall Street broker will today start 300 hours of community service after hiring a man, thought to be his mechanic, to do his jury duty for him. Andrew Levinson, a vice-president at Lehman Brothers, agreed to plead guilty to criminal contempt before Manhattan Criminal Court. Lawyers say his is the first case of juror impersonation to produce a conviction.

But he is not alone in the ruse. The New York jury selection process is long and tortuous, generally keeping those sum-

moned to the courts away from work for at least a week.

According to Vincent Homenick, an official at the Manhattan court, large numbers of citizens consider themselves too important to bother with jury duty; they either seek endless deferments, or pay an impostor.

"We're going after them," he pledged yesterday. "The days of just throwing your jury duty summons away are over."

Mr Levinson's devious stratagem came apart when a man believed to be his mechanic took his seat in the jury box. Judge Sheila Abdus-Salam asked: "Are you Andrew Levinson?" He replied: "No,

I'm not," asked to use the bathroom and never returned. Mr Levinson, 36, reportedly offered a humanitarian defence for his actions, saying that he had to get out of jury duty to take his wife on holiday in Italy to recover from months of tending to her father, who was terminally ill. She could not reschedule the trip because she had to return to her teaching job.

Mr Homenick, however, points to Mr Levinson's jury-service record: he is recorded as serving only once since 1984 — four days in 1987 — and has obtained 14 deferments since then. The usual number of deferments allowed before being obliged to serve is six.

TOURIST RATES

	Bank	Bank
Australia \$	2.00	2.00
Austria Sch	17.80	18.40
Belgium Fr	48.16	48.16
Canada C\$	2.24	2.24
Cyprus Cyp£	0.779	0.724
Denmark Kr	10.96	9.28
Finland Mk	20.48	20.48
France Fr	6.74	6.08
Germany DM	2.24	2.24
Greece Dr	369.20	369.20
Hong Kong \$	12.79	11.79
India Rupee	268.10	268.10
Japan Yen	170.50	154.00
Malta Lm	0.616	0.616
Netherlands Gld	2.24	2.24
Norway Kr	11.10	11.10
Portugal Esc	200.48	200.48
S Africa Rd	2.15	2.15
Spain Ptas	166.40	166.40
Sweden Kr	11.60	11.60
Switzerland Fr	2.15	1.97
Turkey Lira	1.97	6079.00
USA \$	1.00	1.00

Notes for small denomination bank notes only as supplied by Barclays Bank PLC. Different rates may apply to travellers' cheques. Rates in at close of trading yesterday.

LEGAL & PUBLIC NOTICES

071-782 7344

PUBLIC NOTICES

REUNION OF FORMER MEMBERS OF THE OFFICER TRAINING CORPS IN EDINBURGH

Former members of the Officer Training Corps in Edinburgh are invited to a Reunion, Reception & Buffet Supper on Saturday, 9 September 1995 in The Playfair Library Hall, The University of Edinburgh, Old College, South Bridge, Edinburgh, 7.15pm for 7.30pm.

Tickets, price £25, together with full details can be obtained from: Maureen Clowe, Events Manager, Development & Alumni Services Office, The University of Edinburgh Old College, Edinburgh, EH8 9YL, Tel 0131 650 2234/ Fax 0131 650 2239.

LEGAL NOTICES

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE
CHANCERY DIVISION
IN MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 1985
NOTICE OF THE ORDER OF THE COURT
The Order of the High Court of Justice, Chancery Division, made on 13 January 1995, confirming the appointment of the Liquidator of the above-named company, is hereby published for the information of the creditors of the company and of the members of the company.

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□ A large pair of shoes to fill □ Pentos ring fences its troubles □ Ritblat outbids Ross Goobey

Strachan's signing

THE bells might have been ringing in the City yesterday as a puff of white smoke emerged from BTR's headquarters in Victoria. Those wise birds on BTR's board have chosen someone to run the £11 billion industrial products company into the next century, and someone the City feels it can do business with.

Ian Strachan, the chosen one, has a curriculum vitae that is the model of the modern manager. After taking a double first from Cambridge and a masters from Princeton he then found himself a comfortable niche in Exxon for 17 years before being snapped up by RTZ to be its finance director.

By all reports, Mr Strachan is a darling of RTZ's institutional shareholders. They particularly like his slide presentations of the goings-on in RTZ's industrial minerals business.

In contrast, the fund managers could never quite get the hang of Alan Jackson, BTR's current chief executive. He was often too rough-edged for their comfort, and did not have the string of academic gongs that they now expect of senior management.

The excitement generated by Strachan's arrival however does Mr Jackson a huge disservice.

More than almost anyone in BTR's history, he is responsible for building the company into what it is today, first as head of BTR Nylex and more recently as

chief executive of the entire group. He was the architect of BTR's bid for Hawker Siddeley, a deal he began planning almost as soon as he arrived in London, and one that transformed the scale of the group's activities.

BTR now has an impregnable position in countless basic industrial markets. Mr Jackson has continued to build dominant market shares in the group's basic businesses with opportunistic acquisitions, such as Formica.

While Mr Jackson was driving forward an £11 billion business, Mr Strachan has been running one with a turnover of scarcely £1 billion. The largest transaction he is credited with to date is the disposal of Pillar, RTZ's industrial products division, and a large part of the business he was supposed to be managing. The sheer scale and diversity of BTR's business is likely to come as a tremendous shock to him when he is given the keys to the big office next January.

In choosing an outsider to run BTR, the board has admitted that it did not think anyone within the group was up to the

job. This does a disservice to the leading internal candidate, Kathleen O'Donovan, the finance director. She, however, had two insurmountable handicaps in the race. She is young, and she is a woman. Institutional shareholders, like to see men at the helm of their companies, preferably ones in double-breasted suits from the better class of tailor.

BTR's choice of chief executive could well restore it to City grace after its rapid downfall last year. But however loudly the fund managers may proclaim his coronation, Mr Strachan still has it all to prove.

The curse of Athena

□ THERE is nothing like the loss of £7 million to inspire a sense of rancour and bitterness. Much has been said, mostly uncomplimentary, about the ring-fencing operation that has apparently kept large chunks of Pentos's retail operation out of the hands of the receiver and limited the damage to the parent



company from the collapse of Athena.

The unsecured trade creditors of Athena, the poster group that turned up its toes in the dead week between Christmas and New Year, are incensed about the financial reorganisation that meant Pentos was not required to stand behind the liabilities of its stricken subsidiary. A study by Chantrey Vellacott, the accountants, gives an idea why.

Consider the position of the average supplier to Athena, perhaps even the contract printer entrusted with the sacred task of producing the ubiquitous tennis poster. He or she trots along to Companies House to discover that the customer is part of a respectable plc and has turnover, of itself,

of £173 million in the latest year on record, 1992. An inquiry to Dun & Bradstreet, the company credit specialist, would have yielded similar information.

So far, so reliable. But at the end of last year a large chunk of that customer, comprising the Dillons and Ryman's retail chains, was transferred out of the business, then known as Pentos Retailing Group. What was left when the receiver arrived enjoyed sales of a mere £45 million and was therefore a rather less solid entity.

The transfer, at full market value courtesy of work by Arthur Andersen and Schroders, was done theoretically to allow Athena to be sold. When negotiations broke down with potential buyers and the receivers went in, those other two retail businesses were, as it turned out, comfortably outside the ring fence.

One justification, and one of which Jeremy Bentham would have been proud, is that putting the three retail chains together would have meant all would have foundered, to the ruin of a far greater number of creditors. True; but the clear

implication is that both Dillons, currently profitable, and Ryman, not yet so but improving, are equally adrift from the parent plc. The clear lesson from the Athena saga may not have sunk in to their respective suppliers.

First past the Postel

□ IT CAN only be a matter of time before British Land pockets the outstanding share in Broadgate Properties. Rosehaugh's receiver may sit on his hands looking clever and content, but he has little choice but to play ball with Mr Ritblat, who has the trump card of a pre-emption right. A benchmark price of £120 million has been set for the stake, and, sooner or later, Rosehaugh's bankers will get bored of waiting for their money. Few investors will be keen to engage in a bid battle with British Land.

Few that is, with the exception of Postel. The behaviour of one of the UK's pension funds in the battle for Broadgate has been astonishing. After seeing British Land quietly slip into the back

door of Stanhope's posh Berkeley Square headquarter with a shareholding of 29 per cent, most property investors would have watched patiently from the sidelines, waiting to take advantage of any sign of failure.

That would be the normal behaviour of a pension fund; institutions like quick deals and tend to take a back seat in bid battles.

Mr Ross Goobey takes a different view and appears to relish the role of entrepreneur. This is his second tilt at a quoted property company and the second high-profile failure. What is more extraordinary is that this time the cards were stacked against Postel from the start.

The joint venture between Rosehaugh and Stanhope gave each side a right of pre-emption if one party wanted to sell. British Land had a secure seat at the table, but Postel needed both Stanhope and Rosehaugh to agree to its offer. By making an offer to the Rosehaugh receiver, Postel could only succeed in triggering Stanhope's pre-emption right, leaving the pension fund with no secure bargaining position.

Postel's pensioners must be bemused at the buccaneering approach to managing their money, which has yet to show any fruit. The trustees are probably feeling bemused as well.

Dissidents threaten NHL's shake-up

By NEIL BENNETT, DEPUTY BUSINESS EDITOR

NATIONAL HOME LOANS, the mortgage lender, faces a battle with a dissident group of preference shareholders, who are demanding better terms in the company's financial reorganisation.

Gruss Partners, a little-known institutional investment firm, is contacting NHL's preference shareholders and urging them to veto the reorganisation. According to City sources, Gruss claims to speak for holders of 14 per cent of the preference shares.

Gruss is thought to have approached Jonathan Perry, chairman of NHL, to demand a higher stake in the reorganised group in return for its support for the deal.

NHL needs the approval of 75 per cent of preference shareholders to complete its reorganisation, or it could face further difficult negotiations with its bankers. Michael Bell, managing director of Gruss, was unavailable for comment.

NHL yesterday revealed details of the reorganisation, in which preference shareholders are being offered three ordinary shares for each preference share. In return, for waiving their rights their accrued dividends which have not been paid since July 1991. The offer will leave the preference shareholders with three quarters of the votes in the reorganised company.

After the conversion, shareholders will be asked to take part in a £50.3 million rights issue, and the shares will be consolidated on a ten-for-one basis. Holders are being offered three new shares for every 25 they hold in the rights issue at 11p each, or 140p once NHL shares are consolidated.

The financial reconstruction and rights issue will end NHL's three-year fight for survival. The group had to be rescued by the Bank of England in 1991 after the closure of the Bank of Credit and Commerce International unsettled the financial markets. It will provide the company with enough capital to continue lending new mortgages and to start paying dividends once again. Mr Perry yesterday said that the reorganisation was crucial for NHL's continued recovery. "Without the new equity, the company will be at the very least set back in its progress and if that happens one must fear for the share price."

The rights issue has also allowed NHL to renegotiate its bank lending arrangements and put in place a new £160 million facility at a far lower interest rate than before. At the height of its financial troubles, the group was forced to sign a £710 million lending arrangement at a high rate.

Tempus, page 26

BTR choice of Strachan confirmed

BTR yesterday confirmed leaked reports that it has appointed Ian Strachan, the deputy chief executive of RTZ, as its new chief executive, the first time an outsider has been chosen to run the group. He will take up the post when Alan Jackson retires at the beginning of next year (Neil Bennett writes).

The news was received well in the City, which has recently been concerned by the lack of any obvious successor to Mr Jackson. Mr Jackson, who will be 60 next year, will remain chairman of BTR Nylex and a director of the company.

"I've had a wonderful innings, but I think we have found an excellent man," Mr Jackson said yesterday. He said that he was looking forward to returning to his native Melbourne to manage his two farms and 1,400 cattle. BTR said that it is seeking two external non-executive directors, the first time it has looked outside its own executives for board members.

See Pennington, this page



Sir Philip Harris, chairman of Carpetright, yesterday with Ian Sneyd, finance director, left, and John Kitching, sales director

Carpetright beats a declining market

THE success story at Carpetright has continued unabated as the carpet retailer reported a 46 per cent rise in profits in the first half against the backdrop of a declining market (Susan Gilchrist writes).

Sir Philip Harris, chairman, said the carpet market fell about 10 per cent between April and October last year, a victim of the hot weather and contin-

uing stagnant housing market. Carpetright defied the trend, increasing like for like sales 4 per cent.

Pre-tax profits jumped to £8.05 million from £5.51 million in the six months to October 29. Earnings per share rose to 6.8p from 4.7p. The figures were at the top end of City expectations and some analysts up-graded their full-year profit forecasts

by £1 million to about £20 million. The chain now has 12 per cent of Britain's carpet market, double the figure it held when it floated in June 1993.

The group's expansion programme continued with 18 new stores added in the first half bringing the total to 163. A further 22 stores are due to open in the second half. Sir Philip said the group is on track to achieve its target of 250

within the next two and a half years. Sir Philip said current trading was encouraging and the market has begun to stabilise. He forecast a small rise in prices in the spring, the first for more than two years. The interim dividend rises to 3.9p from 2.7p and will be paid on February 24.

Tempus, page 26

US trade deficit nears record low

THE American trade deficit widened to \$10.53 billion in November, indicating a worsening that could make the shortfall for the whole of 1994 the biggest on record.

The Commerce Department said that the deficit in goods and services was 4.3 per cent higher than October's revised \$10.10 billion deficit, laying the blame primarily on the seventh consecutive month of record imports.

Exports, in which the Clinton Administration has invested much political capital, also climbed to record levels in November, lifted by a surge in aircraft sales, to stand 2.2 per cent higher than in October. After 11 months' figures, the 1994 trade deficit was running at an annualised \$152.5 billion, or slightly above the record set in 1987.

Kidder, Peabody charge lops 48% off GE earnings

FROM SEAN MAC CARTHAIGH IN NEW YORK

GENERAL Electric's fourth-quarter earnings have fallen 48 per cent after a one-off charge of \$917 million relating to Kidder, Peabody, the Wall Street investment firm. Profits were down to \$768 million, or 45 cents a share, from \$1.47 billion, or 87 cents a share, for the same period in 1993.

For the year GE said its net income, after a \$1.18 billion loss from the discontinued operations of Kidder, Peabody, rose 10 per cent to \$4.72 billion from \$4.31 billion in 1993, which had seen restructuring charges.

Sales for the three months to December 31, rose almost 5 per cent to \$17.79 billion from \$16.98 billion in the 1993 quarter. Sales for the year rose 8 per cent to \$60.10 billion

from \$55.70 billion in 1993. Kidder, Peabody lurched from one crisis to another in 1994. Joseph Jett, one of its high-flying traders, was fired after he allegedly invented millions of dollars' worth of fake profits to boost his personal bonus. Michael Carpenter, chief executive, and several other top managers, resigned or were fired, and were replaced by GE executives.

Finally, after job cuts and defections, GE put an end to its eight-year foray into brokerage by selling Kidder, Peabody to PaineWebber.

For the year GE said 11 of its 12 businesses had higher revenues, and five businesses — GE Capital Services, Motors, Transportation Systems, Plastics, and Information Ser-

vices — made double-digit rises. Operating margins rose to a record 13.6 per cent of sales, an improvement on the previous year's 12.5 per cent.

John Welch, the chairman, said the "record results of 220,000 boundaryless GE employees were at times overshadowed by the well-chronicled Kidder, Peabody issue".

Mr Welch added: "For the year, GE achieved record ongoing earnings, operating margins, cash flows and stock turns, while continuing to reduce debt-to-capital and increasing our returns on investment and equity. We enter 1995 positioned better than ever to deliver a year of record results to our shareholders."

Request for Information

Our client wishes to obtain product information from parties able to supply a packaged Fleet Management System to support the areas of Fleet Management, Finance, Decision Support, Reporting and archival of data. The supplier should provide the following information:

- Hardware, software and database environments the application is designed for;
- Salient features of the package;
- The extent of package usage in Australia and overseas;
- The style of support/maintenance provided by the supplier;
- Indicative licensing costs;
- Quality standards used in developing, distributing and supporting the package;
- Brief history of the supplying/maintaining company.

Please forward all information to:
Natalie Hamilton
Ernst & Young Consulting
GPO Box 2646
Sydney NSW 2001
Australia

The closing date for the Request for Information is 5.00pm on Friday 3 February 1995.

ERNST & YOUNG

L&G figures show pensions market damage

By SARAH BAGNALL, INSURANCE CORRESPONDENT



David Prosser of L&G: not expecting easier times

LEGAL & GENERAL, the UK insurer, yesterday revealed the extent of the damage caused to the industry by mis-selling of pensions and the requirement for commissions to be disclosed.

L&G's new business figures for 1994 showed sharp falls in sales in numerous lines of business. Prudential, the UK's largest life insurer, confirmed the tough market conditions with weak new business sales.

L&G's statement, which came an hour and a quarter after the market closed, revealed that worldwide new life and pensions business had fallen 20 per cent to £1.1 billion. In the UK, sales of pension products slumped 26 per cent from £726.1 million to £534.1 million. The biggest decline was sales of single pensions, which tumbled 29 per cent to £471.1

million. The decline in sales of annual pensions was contained to 4 per cent.

Last February L&G was fined £180,000 and forced to pay costs of £220,000 by its regulator after being found guilty of serious rule breaches. David Prosser, chief executive, said: "The UK market has proved difficult in 1994, adding that he did not expect a significant improvement in the operating environment."

Prudential revealed a negligible rise in worldwide sales of life, pensions and investment products in 1994. The shares fell 1p to 316p. A breakdown revealed that regular contribution sales rose 8 per cent to £620 million while single contribution sales were flat at £5.1 billion.

Reflecting the turbulence in the insurance industry in the UK, British new business sales fell 2 per cent. Annual

premium personal pension sales fell 7 per cent to £115 million, while single premium personal pension sales dropped 38 per cent to £249 million.

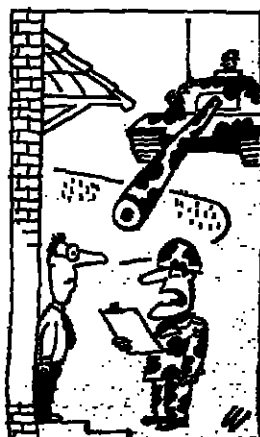
A company spokesman said that the decline in personal pension sales reflected the industry's "unpopularity" caused by pensions mis-selling and the sharp drop in pension transfers business. The group benefited from better performance elsewhere: investment product sales almost tripled to £96 million while overseas operations lifted sales of both regular and single premium products.

London & Manchester also reported new business figures, buoyed by a 39 per cent leap in sales of corporate pensions. As a result new annual premiums rose 4.3 per cent. Single premium business fell 13.7 per cent. The shares fell 3p to 317p.

THE TIMES CITY DIARY

New bride for Holdsworth

SIR Trevor Holdsworth, whose long City career has seen him as chairman at British Satellite Broadcasting, GKN, Allied Colloids and now at National Power, has a new admirer in his life who says he is a "thoroughly nice bloke". Jenny Watson, his PA for the past nine years, says (without prejudice) he is not the awe-inspiring director shareholders might think, and has accepted his proposal of marriage. Sir Trevor, widowed 14 months ago and who celebrates his 68th birthday on May 29, and Jenny take their vows in London on January 28. If there is an organiser at the ceremony, he had better watch his notes. Sir Trevor is not only a formidable accountant, but also an accomplished classical pianist. He has performed on behalf of various charities at, among other places, the Festival Hall, the Banqueting House, and various cathedrals. The honeymoon will be short and sweet. Sir Trevor is busy guiding into public hands the Government's remaining stake in National Power, and Jenny has to be back at work.



'Good morning — could I interest you in a Naafi pension policy?'

Best and worst

IAN STRACHAN, deputy to RTZ chief executive Robert Wilson, will certainly make an elegant addition to BTR when he joins as managing director on April 25, just 17 days after his 52nd birthday. On January 1 next year, he succeeds Alan Jackson as BTR's chief executive — a position of power for which he would have had to wait much longer had he stayed with RTZ. Colleagues say Ian is a marvellous communicator — just what BTR needs — and his suits, and perfect haircut, mark him out as one of City's best dressers. Here's hoping the ghost of Sir Owen Green, BTR's man at the helm until May 1993, has been laid. In his day, he was often voted the City's worst dressed businessman.

Pincer move

WARBURG could not be won on the market. But will it be beaten in the street? Having repelled a stock market assault from Morgan Stanley, Warburg may be facing a threat to its foundations from a client, British Land. The property company already owns Warburg HQ at 15 Finsbury Avenue and the addition of Broadgate will leave it surrounded by British Land. No one at BL will admit to ambitions to take over a merchant bank, but with former Warburg alumnus Nick Ritblat on board, his father, chairman John, is in a strong position to make a move.

Two-way bet

HAVING trouble motivating staff? Take a leaf from Robert Caban, managing director of Oram, the British subsidiary of Siemens. His bright idea is to inspire more effort is to offer two equal annual prizes. One for best individual performance. The other for the biggest mistake. Blessed too are they who take a risk!

COLIN CAMPBELL

Defence industry fights for a future without the US

Britain recruits comrades in arms

Procurement decisions will determine the alliances that reshape European defence strategy, says Ross Tieman

Britain's defence industry is fighting for a future. Caught in a no-man's land between American mega-mergers and Franco-German rapprochement, it is ducking and diving in an effort to retain the critical mass and technological leadership that have made it the biggest in the Western world, outside the United States.

The tension is mounting. A series of defence industry consolidations in the United States, culminating in the merger of Lockheed and Martin Marietta, which was approved by federal authorities last week, has given the Americans formidable economies of scale.

At the same time, though less reported in Britain, France and Germany have formed a joint procurement executive designed to synchronise and combine much of their defence purchasing. Based on an agreement signed at Mulhouse, France, last August, this has given rise to a new French project of European integration: l'Europe de l'Armement.

The creation of a single, unified arms industry in Europe is becoming a cornerstone of industrial, defence and European policy for both France and Germany. France, which like Britain has an overlarge defence manufacturing sector rooted in Cold War insecurities and a colonial past, has multiple goals.

It wants to contain the threat of a German military resurgence; it wants to counter American economic might; and it wants a partner to share the cost of staying in the arms technology race.

Germany, aggressively rebuilding its aerospace and defence technology base, wants to make the equipment its forces will need for a growing international role without the cost or publicity of going it alone.

For cost is containing the ambition of politicians and generals alike, as never before. Every new generation of defence technology costs two to three times as much as its predecessor. Every major programme runs over budget.

The Europeans, who lack the economies of scale enjoyed by the Americans, started collaborating on the most expensive, high-tech projects: combat aircraft.

But programmes such as the Tornado bomber and Eurofighter 2000, involving Britain, Germany, Italy and Spain, have failed to solve the problem. Duplication of design and assembly in each partner country has inflated costs: differing

needs have compromised weapon performance.

Acknowledging these shortcomings, European governments began discreetly to encourage their national defence industry champions to combine forces. An extraordinary number of joint-venture deals have already been done.

What those agreements show is that despite the French political desire to reinforce links with Germany, the industrial axis is Franco-British. This partly reflects the limited scale and restricted out-of-area capability of German forces in the past, as well as constraints on German arms exports.

Aérospatiale of France and Daimler-Benz Aerospace, formerly Deutsche Aerospace, have combined their helicopter businesses to create Eurocopter. Now they are talking about merging their missile businesses, and more.

But Britain's GEC, piloted by that wily old strategist Lord Weinstock, is well ahead of the game. With a former French Defence Secretary, Aly Giraud, on his main board, Lord Weinstock has set up a string of businesses with former French rivals. Prominent among them are Matra Marconi Space in satellites; JVC Horizon, the prime contractor on a three-nation frigate programme; and GEC-Thomson Airborne Radar, which is intended to refit the Eurofighter and its French equivalent, Rafale, in 10 or 15 years' time.

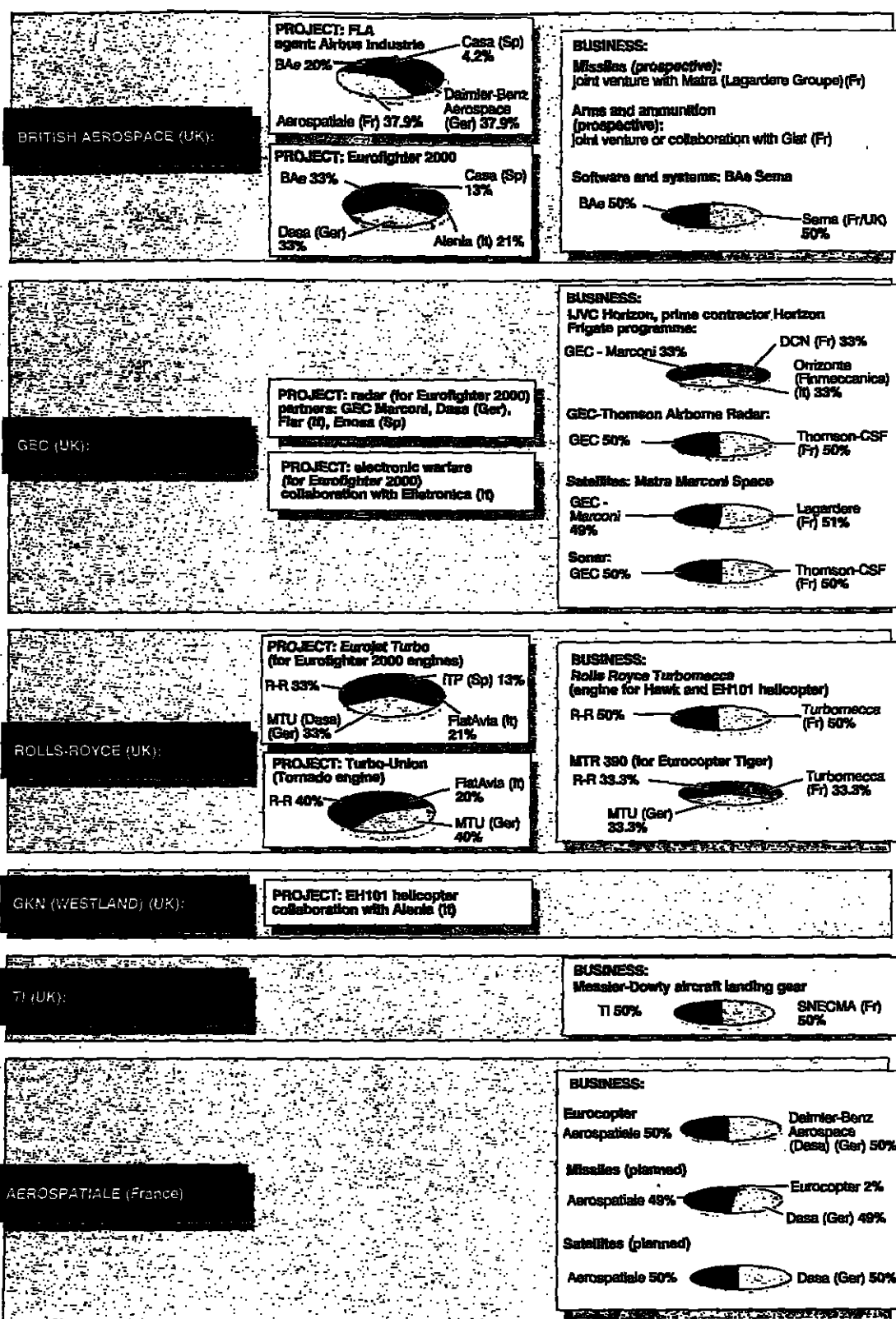
British Aerospace is pursuing its naval ambitions through a 50/50 joint venture with the Anglo-French software group Sema. However, the consolidation process has become bogged down recently in battles over technology, ownership and national control.

The Mulhouse accord will break that logjam. For it brings into the open a responsibility that Britain's Ministry of Defence has long sought to evade: procurement decisions will determine the alliances that reshape Europe's defence industry. Without a coherent industrial strategy at the MoD, British companies will be at a profound disadvantage to their French peers and their German would-be rivals.

That is why two of the most powerful watchdog committees in the House of Commons, Trade and Industry and Defence, have decided to launch a joint inquiry into defence procurement.

Many people in the MoD remain in thrall to the United States and are deeply distrustful of European alliances. Yet there are signs that some

MoD must use its buying power more effectively



officials, and indeed some ministers, are at last waking up to the dangers. Last November Roger Freeman, the newly appointed Minister of State for Defence Procurement, called a meeting to discuss procurement with his continental counterparts.

As a result, Dr Malcolm McIntosh, Britain's civil service chief of defence procurement, is engaged in a series of discussions with Henri Conze, the French procurement chief and close associate of the French Prime Minister, Edouard Balladur, and Jörg Schönbohm, the permanent secretary at the German Procurement Ministry. For whatever other virtues it may have, the transatlantic alliance with the United States has been of limited value to Britain's defence equipment makers.

With consolidation in the US arms industry well advanced, there are fears that in any future transatlantic collaboration, British companies will be offered only a minor role. There is nowhere to turn but to Europe.

The arms industry has long time cycles: ten-year development programmes for a weapon system can

be followed by 25 in service. Today, British Aerospace, GEC, Rolls-Royce and the rest are living off the fruits of past ingenuity and hard-won export contracts.

To thrive, let alone survive, for the next 25 years, they have to be involved in the development of new high-tech weapons systems, which Britain alone is too poor to finance.

Britain, France and Germany now agree that in principle, the new generation of European defence programmes will employ designs and components from the best source, irrespective of nationality. In

the new defence industry era, winner takes all: the loser goes bust. Companies must merge, to reduce competition, or risk their survival on a single procurement decision.

French strategy, spelled out to Mr Freeman last week by M Conze, is aimed at "streamlining" European armaments producers to a core of just one, or preferably two, specialists in each main area of technology.

The French favour 50/50 joint ventures rather than the outright takeovers which Mr Freeman has been keen to encourage. They are willing to accept the price of job losses. But — unspoken subject — they want to maintain control.

In practice, this means promoting deals with British companies, as well as German. Tactics are Machiavellian. For more than 18 months, BAe has been trying to negotiate a merger of its missiles business with that of Matra. But earlier this month, the French Government awarded Matra the contract to develop its APTGD cruise missile. Now, with a strong order book, Matra's demands for majority control are reinforced.

It is now clear that both France and Britain force a consolidation of the European armaments industry around two key projects.

The Horizon frigate programme, under way between Britain, France and Italy, will be the first in which countries will not seek to duplicate each part of the vessel within their own borders. Rather, design work will be concentrated at the contractor which is best equipped to achieve it, and common components will be bought from the lowest-cost source.

The other key programme is the pan-European transport aircraft, known as FLA, which is to be designed and built by Airbus Industrie, the European jetliner consortium. The Europeans need British participation, and a British order for 50 or so planes, to relieve pressure on their overstretched defence budgets and make the aircraft's development viable.

After intense lobbying by France and Germany, Britain has rejoined studies for the aircraft. Dr McIntosh, who had been deeply sceptical about the Europeans' ability to develop the plane on time and to cost, was apparently deeply impressed by what he saw during a visit to the Airbus headquarters in Toulouse last autumn.

This spring, Britain must decide whether to commit itself to the development of the plane itself. If Britain is to have a strong defence industry in the future, it must learn to play the Europeans, and indeed the Americans, at their own game.

Taking the initiative on procurement needs is a start. For unless the MoD uses its buying power effectively to ensure that British companies get a strong position in the next generation of collaborative programmes, be they European or American, it will have no choice but to buy abroad in the future. The select committee report will make gripping reading.

Shops queue up to celebrate the gift of Christmas late

Susan Gilchrist and Sarah Bagnall find festive cheer among retailers

Now that the Christmas term is over, it is time to assess the retailing class of 1994. Glancing through the end-of-term reports, it is clear that shareholders may be asking awkward questions of some pupils, while others will be congratulated with gold stars. But overall the results were not as bad as feared.

The doom merchants had been on the rampage before Christmas. The unpalatable combination of two budgets, two hikes in interest rates and unseasonably warm weather in the autumn hardly laid the foundations for a truly festive season. But the pessimists were largely proved wrong, the exceptions paying the price with plunging share prices and reduced profit forecasts. Christmas came late, but for most it did come.

Bottom of the class was Kingfisher, once considered the analysts' pet. The group was dragged down by a dire performance from Comet, which suffered a near 11 per cent slump in like-for-like

sales, while Woolworths could only manage a 2 per cent increase on last year's lacklustre Christmas.

Kingfisher blamed the tough competitive environment for Comet's problems, but the results of Dixons, its main rival, proved that consumers were willing to go out and buy big-ticket items such as electronic goods. Dixons delivered a 5 per cent increase in like-for-like sales.

This leaves Kingfisher starting the new term in some disarray. It may be forced to make a provision to sort out Comet and Woolworths, which analysts say could be as high as £100 million. Even B&Q, the jewel in its crown, is now under threat from J Sainsbury's designs on Tens, the number two DIY player.

At the other end of the

spectrum were glittering performances from Next and Tesco, who beat even the most optimistic expectations. The Next handwagon just keeps rolling on despite fears that its inexorable sales growth must, if not grind to a halt, at least slow down. The Next retail chain increased sales 17 per cent, while sales from the Directory rose 35 per cent. Tesco had its best Christmas, lifting underlying sales 7 per cent in December, a figure unheard of in the food retailing industry since the halcyon days of the 1980s.

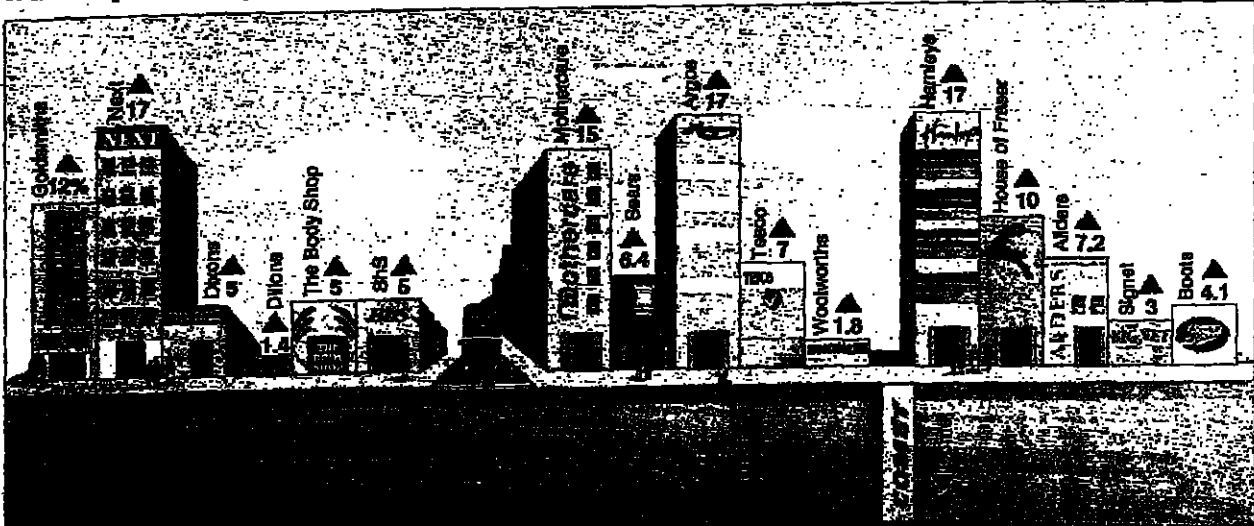
Argos, Storehouse, Lloyds Chemists, Body Shop and Goldsmiths also pleased the City. The crucial question is whether all this sales growth was achieved at the expense of

margins, an unfortunate feature of last year's Christmas trading period. The answer appears to be no. Most retailers managed to hold, if not increase margins despite some aggressive pricing.

However, it was not universal. Sears suffered a slight erosion in margins in the second half, a fact that took the shine off an otherwise commendable 6 per cent rise in Christmas sales.

House of Fraser was another casualty. Margins were hit by deep discounting on unsold winter clothing after the unusually mild autumn. The group, which only came to the market last April, was forced to issue its first profits warning.

Other clothing retailers may have also found it difficult to make up the ground lost in the autumn. A clearer picture will emerge when Marks and Spencer and Burton issue their trading statements next week. They will have to deliver impressive results to beat the best of the class of Christmas 1994.



STATE RAIL Equipment and Spare Parts — Paxman Engines SUPPLY SPECIFICATION NO. 0800144

Tenders closing at 10.00am on Wednesday February 1, 1995 are invited for the supply of genuine spare parts, in accordance with the above specification for Paxman diesel engines which power XPT inter and intra state long distance passenger trains. The supply specification will cover an initial supply period of three years, with an option to extend that period by a further two years.

Copies of the specification (AUD\$100.00 per set non-refundable — payment is by cheque only, in Australian Dollars, to be made payable to State Rail Authority) are obtainable from Room 1007, 10th floor, Transport House, 11-31 York Street, Sydney 2000, Australia between 8.30am and 4.00pm Monday to Friday.

Further enquiries regarding obtaining a copy of the specification, telephone +61 2 224 4024, Fax +61 2 224 4753.

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BARCLAYS

BUSINESS DEPOSITS

THE TIMES UNIT TRUST INFORMATION SERVICE

[illegible]

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place ten business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

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1104	8.07	100%	98	100%	Do
1105	8.71	100%	99	100%	Do
1106	9.35	100%	100	100%	Do
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1113	7.41	131%	104	126%	Do
1114	7.47	131%	105	126%	Do
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360					

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348	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040	2041	2042	2043	2044	2045	2046	2047	2048	2049	2050	2051	2052	2053	2054	2055	2056	2057	2058	2059	2060	2061	2062	2063	2064	2065	2066	2067	2068	2069	2070	2071	2072	2073	2074	2075	2076	2077	2078	2079	2080	2081	2082	2083	2084	2085	2086	2087	2088	2089	2090	2091	2092	2093	2094	2095	2096	2097	2098	2099	2100	2101	2102	2103	2104	2105	2106	2107	2108	2109	2110	2111	2112	2113	2114	2115	2116	2117	2118	2119	2120	2121	2122	2123	2124	2125	2126	2127	2128	2129	2130	2131	2132	2133	2134	2135	2136	2137	2138	2139	2140	2141	2142	2143	2144	2145	2146	2147	2148	2149	2150	2151	2152	2153	2154	2155	2156	2157	2158	2159	2160	2161	2162	2163	2164	2165	2166	2167	2168	2169	2170	2171	2172	2173	2174	2175	2176	2177	2178	2179	2180	2181	2182	2183	2184	2185	2186	2187	2188	2189	2190	2191	2192	2193	2194	2195	2196	2197	2198	2199	2200	2201	2202	2203	2204	2205	2206	2207	2208	2209	2210	2211	2212	2213	2214	2215	2216	2217	2218	2219	2220	2221	2222	2223	2224	2225	2226	2227	2228	2229	2230	2231	2232	2233	2234	2235	2236	2237	2238	2239	2240	2241	2242	2243	2244	2245	2246	2247	2248	2249	2250	2251	2252	2253	2254	2255	2256	2257	2258	2259	2260	2261	2262	2263	2264	2265	2266	2267	2268	2269	2270	2271	2272	2273	2274	2275	2276	2277	2278	2279	2280	2281	2282	2283	2284	2285	2286	2287	2288	2289	2290	2291	2292	2293	2294	2295	2296	2297	2298	2299	2300	2301	2302	2303	2304	2305	2306	2307	2308	2309	2310	2311	2312	2313	2314	2315	2316	2317	2318	2319	2320	2321	2322	2323	2324	2325	2326	2327	2328	2329	2330	2331	2332	2333	2334	2335	2336	2337	2338	2339	2340	2341	2342	2343	2344	2345	2346	2347	2348	2349	2350	2351	2352	2353	2354	2355	2356	2357	2358	2359	2360	2361	2362	2363	2364	2365	2366	2367	2368	2369	2370	2371	2372	2373	2374	2375	2376	2377	2378	2379	2380	2381	2382	2383	2384	2385	2386	2387	2388	2389	2390	2391	2392	2393	2394	2395	2396	2397	2398	2399	2400	2401	2402	2403	2404	2405	2406	2407	2408	2409	2410	2411	2412	2413	2414	2415	2416	2417	2418	2419	2420	2421	2422	2423	2424	2425	2426	2427	2428	2429	2430	2431	2432	2433	2434	2435	2436	2437	2438	2439	2440	2441	2442	2443	2444	2445	2446	2447	2448	2449	2450	2451	2452	2453	2454	2455	2456	2457	2458	2459	2460	2461	2462	2463	2464	2465	2466	2467	2468	2469	2470	2471	2472	2473	2474	2475	2476	2477	2478	2479	2480	2481	2482	2483	2484	2485	2486	2487	2488	2489	2490	2491	2492	2493	2494	2495	2496	2497	2498	2499	2500	2501	2502	2503	2504	2505	2506	2507	2508	2509	2510	2511	2512	2513	2514	2515	2516	2517	2518	2519	2520	2521	2522	2523	2524	2525	2526	2527	2528	2529	2530	2531	2532	2533	2534	2535	2536	2537	2538	2539	2540	2541	2542	2543	2544	2545	2546	2547	2548	2549	2550	2551	2552	2553	2554	2555	2556	2557	2558	2559	2560	2561	2562	2563	2564	2565	2566	2567	2568	2569	2570	2571	2572	2573	2574	2575	2576	2577	2578	2579	2580	2581	2582	2583	2584	2585	2586	2587	2588	2589	2590	2591	2592	2593	2594	2595	2596	2597	2598	2599	2600	2601	2602	2603	2604	2605	2606	2607	2608	2609	2610	2611	2612	2613	2614	2615	2616	2617	2618	2619	2620	2621	2622	2623	2624	2625	2626	2627	2628	2629	2630	2631	2632	2633	2634	2635	2636	2637	2638	2639	2640	2641	2642	2643	2644	2645	2646	2647	2648	2649	2650	2651	2652	2653	2654	2655	2656	2657	2658	2659	2660	2661	2662	2663	2664	2665	2666	2667	2668	2669	2670	2671	2672	2673	2674	2675	2676	2677	2678	2679	2680	2681	2682	2683	2684	2685	2686	2687	2688	2689	2690	2691	2692	2693	2694	2695	2696	2697	2698	2699	2700	2701	2702	2703	2704	2705	2706	2707	2708	2709	2710	2711	2712	2713	2714	2715	2716	2717	2718	2719	2720	2721	2722	2723	2724	2725	2726	2727	2728	2729	2730	2731	2732	2733	2734	2735	2736	2737	2738	2739	2740	2741	2742	2743	2744	2745	2746	2747	2748	2749	2750	2751	2752	2753	2754	2755	2756	2757	2758	2759	2760	2761	2762	2763	2764	2765	2766	2767	2768	2769	2770	2771	2772	2773	2774	2775	2776	2777	2778	2779	2780	2781	2782	2783	2784	2785	2786	2787	2788	2789	2790	2791	2792	2793	2794	2795	2796	2797	2798	2799	2800	2801	2802	2803	2804	2805	2806	2807	2808	2809	2810	2811	2812	2813	2814	2815	2816	2817	2818	2819	2820	2821	2822	2823	2824	2825	2826	2827	2828	2829	2830	2831	2832	2833	2834	2835	2836	2837	2838	2839	2840	2841	2842	2843	2844	2845	2846	2847	2848	2849	2850	2851	2852	2853	2854	2855	2856	2857	2858	2859	2860	2861	2862	2863	2864	2865	2866	2867	2868	2869	2870	2871	2872	2873	2874	2875	2876	2877	2878	2879	2880	2881	2882	2883	2884	2885	2886	2887	2888	2889	2890	2891	2892	2893	2894	2895	2896	2897	2898	2899	2900	2901	2902	2903	2904	2905	2906	2907	2908	2909	2910	2911	2912	2913	2914	2915	2916	2917	2918	2919	2920	2921	2922	2923	2924	2925	2926	2927	2928	2929	2930	2931	2932	2933	2934	2935	2936	2937	2938	2939	2940	2941	2942	2943	2944	2945	2946	2947	2948	2949	2950	2951	2952	2953	2954	2955	2956	2957	2958	2959	2960	2961	2962	2963	2964	2965	2966	2967	2968	2969	2970	2971	2972	2973	2974	2975	2976	2977	2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	Price £	++	Mid £	Co £
2005	100%	...	8.50	8.65
2005	100%	...	9.00	9.75
2005-05	100%	...	10.30	10.90
2005-06	100%	...	9.70	9.95
2005-06	100%	...	9.40	9.80
2005-07	100%	...	10.00	10.60
2005-08	100%	...	9.40	9.80
2005-09	100%	...	10.20	10.80
2005-10	100%	...	9.80	10.30
2005-11	100%	...	9.40	9.80
2005-12	100%	...	9.60	9.80
2006-01	100%	...	9.80	10.30
2006-02	100%	...	9.40	9.80
2006-03	100%	...	9.60	10.10
2006-04	100%	...	9.40	9.80
2006-05	100%	...	9.60	10.10
2006-06	100%	...	9.40	9.80
2006-07	100%	...	9.60	10.10
2006-08	100%	...	9.40	9.80
2006-09	100%	...	9.60	10.10
2006-10	100%	...	9.40	9.80
2006-11	100%	...	9.60	10.10
2006-12	100%	...	9.40	9.80
2007-01	100%	...	9.60	10.10
2007-02	100%	...	9.40	9.80
2007-03	100%	...	9.60	10.10
2007-04	100%	...	9.40	9.80
2007-05	100%	...	9.60	10.10
2007-06	100%	...	9.40	9.80
2007-07	100%	...	9.60	10.10
2007-08	100%	...	9.40	9.80
2007-09	100%	...	9.60	10.10
2007-10	100%	...	9.40	9.80
2007-11	100%	...	9.60	10.10
2007-12	100%	...	9.40	9.80
2008-01	100%	...	9.60	10.10
2008-02	100%	...	9.40	9.80
2008-03	100%	...	9.60	10.10
2008-04	100%	...	9.40	9.80
2008-05	100%	...	9.60	10.10
2008-06	100%	...	9.40	9.80
2008-07	100%	...	9.60	10.10
2008-08	100%	...	9.40	9.80
2008-09	100%	...	9.60	10.10
2008-10	100%	...	9.40	9.80
2008-11	100%	...	9.60	10.10
2008-12	100%	...	9.40	9.80
2009-01	100%	...	9.60	10.10
2009-02	100%	...	9.40	9.80
2009-03	100%	...	9.60	10.10
2009-04	100%	...	9.40	9.80
2009-05	100%	...	9.60	10.10
2009-06	100%	...	9.40	9.80
2009-07	100%	...	9.60	10.10
2009-08	100%	...	9.40	9.80
2009-09	100%	...	9.60	10.10
2009-10	100%	...	9.40	9.80
2009-11	100%	...	9.60	10.10
2009-12	100%	...	9.40	9.80
2010-01	100%	...	9.60	10.10
2010-02	100%	...	9.40	9.80
2010-03	100%	...	9.60	10.10
2010-04	100%	...	9.40	9.80
2010-05	100%	...	9.60	10.10
2010-06	100%	...	9.40	9.80
2010-07	100%	...	9.60	10.10
2010-08	100%	...	9.40	9.80
2010-09	100%	...	9.60	10.10
2010-10	100%	...	9.40	9.80
2010-11	100%	...	9.60	10.10
2010-12	100%	...	9.40	9.80
2011-01	100%	...	9.60	10.10
2011-02	100%	...	9.40	9.80
2011-03	100%	...	9.60	10.10
2011-04	100%	...	9.40	9.80
2011-05	100%	...	9.60	10.10
2011-06	100%	...	9.40	9.80
2011-07	100%	...	9.60	10.10
2011-08	100%	...	9.40	9.80
2011-09	100%	...	9.60	10.10
2011-10	100%	...	9.40	9.80
2011-11	100%	...	9.60	10.10
2011-12	100%	...	9.40	9.80
2012-01	10	...	9.60	10.10

Our report
of the tea

INFOTECH

Built according to our instructions

Computer companies are selling off their production facilities to concentrate on product development and marketing, David Hewson reports

Most people who buy personal computers plump for one of the big, familiar names such as IBM, Apple, Compaq and Dell — companies which, in the words of marketing people, carry strong "brand equity" for good technology and quality products at the right price.

What few customers realise is that a large part of their PC, perhaps the entire machine, may never have been near a factory bearing the name stamped on its box. Many companies in the electronics business — from PC and work station makers to cellphone and hi-fi firms — are coming to the conclusion that their talents may lie in designing products, not making them.

IBM and Apple are already experimenting with third-party manufacturers in a big way. Some analysts believe that the shift of PCs towards mass market items makes it inevitable that the computer giants of today will, by the turn of the century, have shed the expensive business of running their own production facilities. They will have learnt to concentrate instead on the more critical factors of product development and marketing.

This is a fundamental shift for the trade. In the past, many may

have bought in lines of common products, such as monitors, from other smaller companies, put their own name on the front, then added nothing to the item except an extra 15 per cent on the price.

They become dealers in the intellectual property of their own hardware and software designs, then pass on the completed blueprints to a third-party manufacturer who can turn out the end product in volume at short notice.

In theory, everyone wins, but one group is winning more than most at the moment — the third-party companies. One of the largest, though barely known outside the industry, is Soletron, founded in Silicon Valley in 1977.

After years of low-level manufacturing of component boards, Soletron is now on a dizzying growth curve. Its latest financial results showed net quarterly sales of £338 million, a 57 per cent increase on the same period last year. Much of the growth has come through the tactic of approaching big-name manufacturers and buying their surplus volume.

Over the past 18 months, Soletron has bought a printed circuit assembly factory from Hewlett-Packard, two IBM plants, one in France and one in North Carolina, and a circuit assembly



David Pratt, managing director of Soletron, says the workforce has risen from 700 to more than 1,000 since the firm was taken over

site in Dunfermline from Philips. All are now busier than they were under their previous owners.

At Dunfermline, David Pratt, the local managing director, has seen the workforce rise from 700 under Philips to more than 1,000 with Soletron. The factory makes everything from parts for upmarket hi-fi systems and cellphones to complete PCs, and lists among its blue-chip customers Motorola, IBM, AT&T

and the hi-fi firm Bang & Olufsen. In California, Soletron is also a manufacturer for Apple, Hewlett-Packard and Sun Microsystems.

Customers rarely hear of third-party manufacturing deals. The brands fear that they will not like the idea that their big-name PC was made by a company unknown to the general public. Mr Pratt is happy to quote his customer list at Dunfermline, but prefers to keep

the details of what he makes for his clients secret.

By moving to outside manufacturing, technology companies can save money, streamline their engineering processes and bring products to market more quickly. They can also take advantage of some remarkable deals. Because a company like Soletron buys components for a wide range of customers at large volumes, it can often find

them at a lower price than some of its big name clients.

Soletron pitches its bids on an open basis — revealing the margin it will make on the deal — and then owns the parts for the products until they are assembled and passed on to the buyer.

This relieves electronics companies of one of their big financial burdens, the cost of building up huge volumes of stock parts wait-

ing to be turned into products.

The quality of products coming out of the larger third-party companies is, in fact, likely to be as good as anything made in a rival dedicated manufacturing plant.

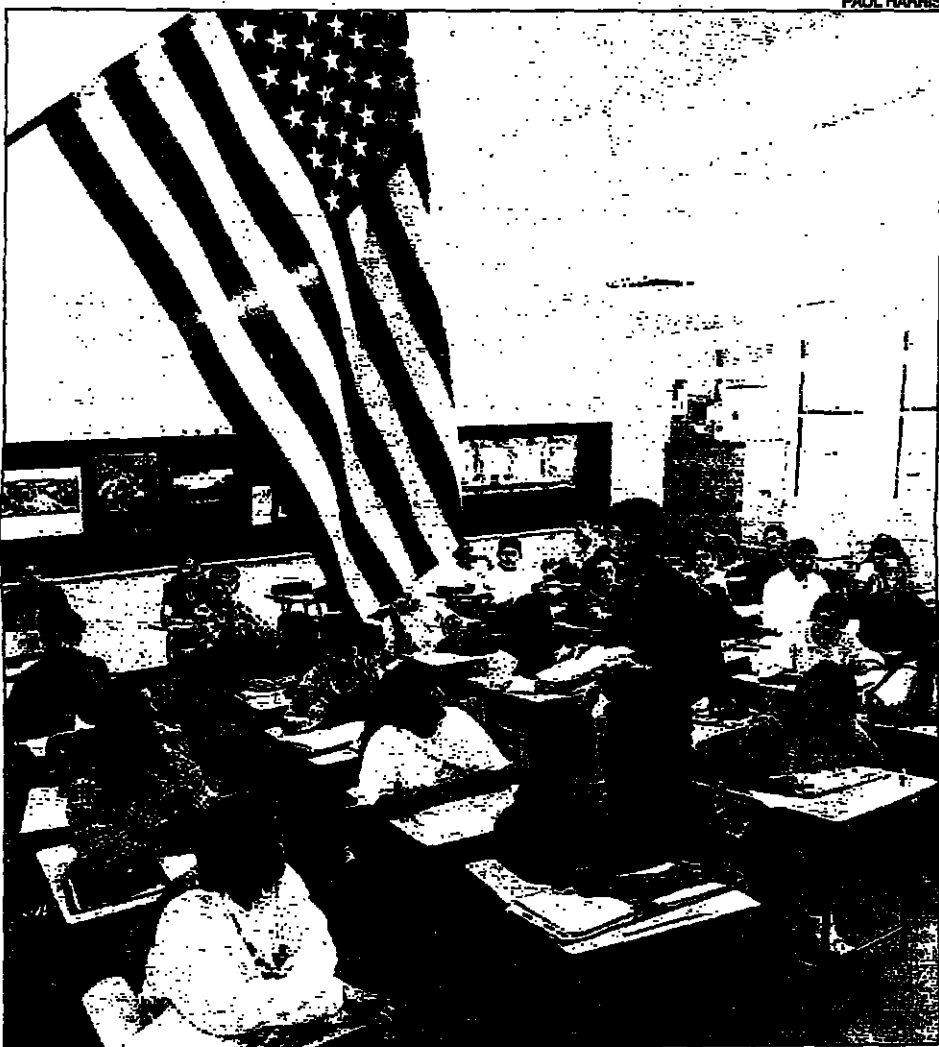
Quality problems not only dismay the companies commissioning the goods but can also eat into the slender margins, which is why Soletron and its larger rivals invest heavily in quality assurance schemes which aim to out-perform any found in a dedicated manufacturing plant.

When the relationship works, it can turn one-off projects into long-term sources of business. Soletron has been working for Apple, IBM, Hewlett-Packard and Sun for a combined total of 41 years and last year generated 73 per cent of its revenue from customers of five years' standing or more.

The American manufacturing industry is now sold on the idea of outsourcing in order to concentrate on the core elements of a business. Contract manufacturing is the technology industry's simplest way to follow the outsourcing trend.

A few companies have taken the reverse direction. Cirrus Logic — the chip maker that helped to pioneer the idea of designing microprocessors but getting someone else to make them — recently entered a deal with IBM to co-own its first chip-making plant. But it is outnumbered by the companies stampeding to put manufacturing outside their businesses.

Customers may, in the end, never notice the difference, except in the low price they pay and the speed with which their chosen model becomes obsolete.



Kansas teachers leave messages about students' grades on personal voice mail boxes

Lost your report? Just ring the teacher

Most children learn to live with the telephone, but how would they feel if it became an instrument to record their performance at school — like the details of this week's homework, yesterday's test marks or a temporary dip in application which might otherwise remain invisible to busy parents?

In the case of 21 schools in the American state of Kansas, children are finding out what it is like to live with their teacher permanently at the end of a telephone line.

All 950 teachers in the Blue Valley school district of Jackson County now have access to a computerised voice mail system, a telephone message facility which allows them to update parents on their child's progress and record general information on everything from the week's homework to projects, exam dates and other class activities.

By using the correct entry code, a parent can access the system from any phone at any time that is convenient. Once connected, parents are able to pick up messages about their child's performance and more general class and school information, all via the child's personal voice mail box, one of 1,000 installed on the system.

The system is controlled by a central computer capable of supporting up to 15,000 individual mail boxes. Frequent users of the system include families with working parents who may find it difficult either

US schools are using voice mail to give parents up-to-date reports

to visit the school or talk to a teacher on the phone during school hours. With voice mail they are able to take part in a confidential two-way communication about their child's progress, says Mike West, a sales manager with Octel Communications, the voice mail company which installed the system.

"We're not saying that voice mail is better than talking directly to someone; it is just more convenient in certain circumstances," Marsha Chappelow, assistant superintendent of the school district in Blue Valley, says.

Features include multiple messaging, allowing the teacher to make one homework announcement for all class mail boxes or a parent representative to send out simultaneous details of a meeting or social event.

It is a far cry from the school note and amnesia system of old, Linda Turner, a parent in the district, says. "Trying to find 15 different pieces of paper in the children's backpacks was never any fun. Now I get all the messages and I know exactly what is important."

Though that might have Big Brother connotations for the

average child, in extreme cases, such as truancy, automated messaging helps to root out a problem before it becomes beyond solution.

Among options for the future, the district is looking at a special truancy tracking facility that would allow all truanties to be recorded and monitored via a special entry code. This, it seems, could also help to fund the system because state governments only pay districts for the number of days each child is in school.

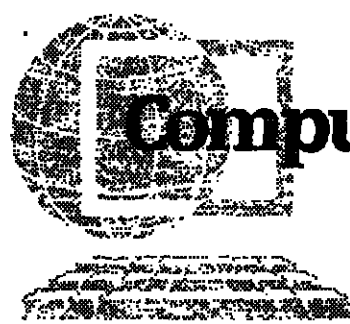
But the success of voice mail in education will ultimately rely on users such as Terri Morse, a teacher at Mission Elementary School, who regards the technology as a more personalised way to talk to parents. "A lot of parents find it difficult to express themselves on paper. Voice mail can help to overcome the problem and gives us a more personal view of how parents feel."

All this, of course, assumes that mail boxes are regularly listened to, messages updated and participants speak to the teachers directly if needed. A common criticism of voice mail among the growing numbers of users in Europe is that the service often appears little better than a frustrating extension of the answerphone. Octel says that this is mainly because of lack of proper training for mailbox users.

NICK COTTAM



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Barry Fox on the changes in compact disc technology and how fun and games are taking over the once staid Philips

Action at the tips of your fingers

The future for the compact disc could become clearer this year, but with a string of unexpected twists. Commercial expediency is the name of the game. Philips has made expensive mistakes over recent years, chief among them staying too long with loser audio, video and television systems. Now the Dutch company is more flexible and could recoup past losses from new uses for CD technology.

Even before Philips launched music CDs ten years ago, the company was planning to use the same pressed discs as read-only memories — or CD-Roms — to distribute computer software to business users.

The technical performance of a CD-Rom system was judged to be more important than ease of use. So Philips also developed — for the consumer market — CD-i, the interactive compact disc system, a user-friendly player that unravels a mix of text, sound and picture images stored on the same "multimedia" disc.

The original plan was for CD-i to carry a mix of education and entertainment, but the consumer yawned at such worthiness and bought Sega and Nintendo video games instead. So 18 months ago Philips coined the slogan "Fun is the name of the game", and started selling CD-i discs that are unashamedly games.

At the same time, the computer

industry changed course, too, and put multimedia and games, as well as business data, on CD-Roms for personal computers. But as people who buy CD-Roms know, the system is far from user-friendly.

Meanwhile, the once technically impossible has become possible. The CD system was designed to record hi-fi stereo sound, which needs a stream of 1.5 million bits a second. Video compression technology now makes it possible for an ordinary CD to store digital TV pictures as well as stereo sound. When care is taken with the compression process, the picture and sound quality can surpass VHS tape.

Here again, Philips's position has changed. Until two years ago, Philips rather smoothly planned to put video on CD only as an integral part of entertainment. Now the Dutch company has offices in Hollywood and is investing heavily in the release of feature films licensed from the major studios.

Feature films that have been digitally compressed by Philips, such as *Apocalypse Now* and *Indecent Proposal*, and music videos such as *Sing's Ten Summoners' Tales*, show what the system can deliver. By the middle of this year all the James Bond films will be available on video CD.

Commercial alliances are also fluid. In the 1980s, Philips formed an alliance with the Japanese giants Sony and Matsushita



Live action: the old-style arcade video game Mad Dog McCree has been put on a single CD which plays on a CD-i player hooked to a domestic television set

(Panasonic) to market CD-i as a world standard format. But both brands broke ranks. Panasonic now backs the 3DO games system in direct competition with CD-i. Sony is launching its own rival CD games system, called *Play Station*. All three are incompatible.

Despite these rifts, Panasonic and Sony have continued to join with Philips and support an annual conference on CD-i. Just before Christmas, at the fifth event, held in Düsseldorf, the Japanese game plan at last became clear. The clue was in a subtle change of conference title, and an added backer. The Japanese company JVC joined

in and the event was renamed "the CD-i and Video CD Conference".

At Düsseldorf, it became clear that Sony, Panasonic and JVC all believe that the Japanese consumer is not yet ready for full interactivity of the type offered by CD-i. Though Sega and Nintendo have grown rich on the Japanese fervour for video games, these require very little creative thought. Takao Ihashi, Sony's general manager of multimedia, says: "Japanese consumers can't understand the benefit of interactivity. That is why we are introducing simple video CD."

The Japanese manufacturers see Video CD as a stepping stone to the

future. It offers limited interactivity, much like a VHS tape, but with much faster access to selected points of a recording because no time is wasted on winding tape.

Video CD also fulfils another function for the Japanese. It neatly bridges the gap between rival and incompatible games and interactive formats: CD-i, 3DO and Commodore's CD32. Most other CD games systems can be easily modified to play Video CDs, by adding a digital video adapter. Some PCs with CD-Rom drives can also be modified to play video CDs and CD-i discs.

In practice, however, many exist-

ing CD-Rom drives are incapable of reading data from Video CDs, and most cannot cope with CD-i discs. This is creating a market opportunity for a new breed of PCs that come, off the shelf, fully equipped and ready to play both Video CD and CD-i software.

Mad Dog McCree, a new CD-i game, points the way to the future. Mad Dog was developed as an arcade video game. It relied on a bulky computer and LaserDisc player to put pictures of cowboys on a screen, which customers "shoot" with a light-sensitive gun.

Cap Disc, an American software company, has put the full pro-

gramme on a single CD, which plays on a CD-i player linked to a domestic TV set. As cowboys shoot or get shot, the CD-i player searches film sequences on the disc, which take the storyline along different routes. Computer graphics generate gunshot effects that blend seamlessly with the video action.

A few minutes playing Mad Dog McCree on a CD-i system gives a far better pointer to the future of multimedia as an entertainment, educational and business tool than any written article can possibly convey. And playing Mad Dog McCree is a whole lot more fun than reading about it.

Viruses sweep the Net

A new form of computer virus could reach epidemic proportions, assisted by transmission over the Internet, software security experts say. Companies are so keen to get online to the worldwide information network that they are failing to include proper security measures when they install an Internet gateway. This is leaving them wide open to hacking and to viruses that infect much of the mass of free software being transmitted over the Net.

Recently, a form of virus that mutates every time it moves — making it difficult to detect — has damaged some corporate and private systems. Such polymorphic viruses also encrypt themselves until the software to which they are attached becomes active. They then decode themselves, replicate in other parts of a computer such as the operating system or the hard disc, and re-encode ready for the next metamorphosis. A particularly virulent form is known as Dark Avenger.

A survey by the National Computing Centre says that virus infections doubled last year, and it estimates the loss to British industry as £128 million. Each virus is also estimated to infect about 142 computers before it is successfully con-

Don't forget security when going online, say software experts

tained, and each attack is likely to cause an average of two days' downtime.

David Emm, the technical support manager for S&S International, the software company that developed the widely used Dr Solomon Virus Scanning Software, says there has been a dramatic increase in virus infection. "At the end of 1990, there were about 200 known viruses and last year 800 or 1,000 new ones. Now we see about 100 new viruses or variants of existing ones a month."

"In the past few months we have seen polymorphic viruses which mutate so that every infection looks different and there is no straight sequence you can scan for."

But the picture is not all gloom. For a start, Mr Emm says, success breeds failure — if a virus kills the system it infects, it stands little chance of being passed on and it attracts special efforts to eradicate it. "Most viruses in the field do very little, if any, damage — just tricks

such as displaying a message, making keys beep or making your floppy disc timeout," he says.

Added to that, most viruses are sloppily written. "They don't have to test their products or anything," he says. "A lot of viruses simply don't do what they were designed to do."

The advent of "Internet-ready" personal computers, which include software and a modem to get buyers online with just a phone call, have forced the manufacturers to take viruses seriously.

Compaq's DeskPro machines, for example, have a built-in virus detector called Safe Start. It sounds the alarm if a virus attacks the system and it checks the computer every time it is switched on to check whether any unauthorised changes have been made.

Based on the various settings of the files on the hard disc, the virus checker compares the result with a code based on "clean" software. If they do not tally, a message is screened indicating where the change has occurred. The user should then be able to use scanning software to identify any virus and kill it.

CHRIS PARTRIDGE

Canadian research is looking at the 'communications device' of the future

A pager made to suit your lifestyle

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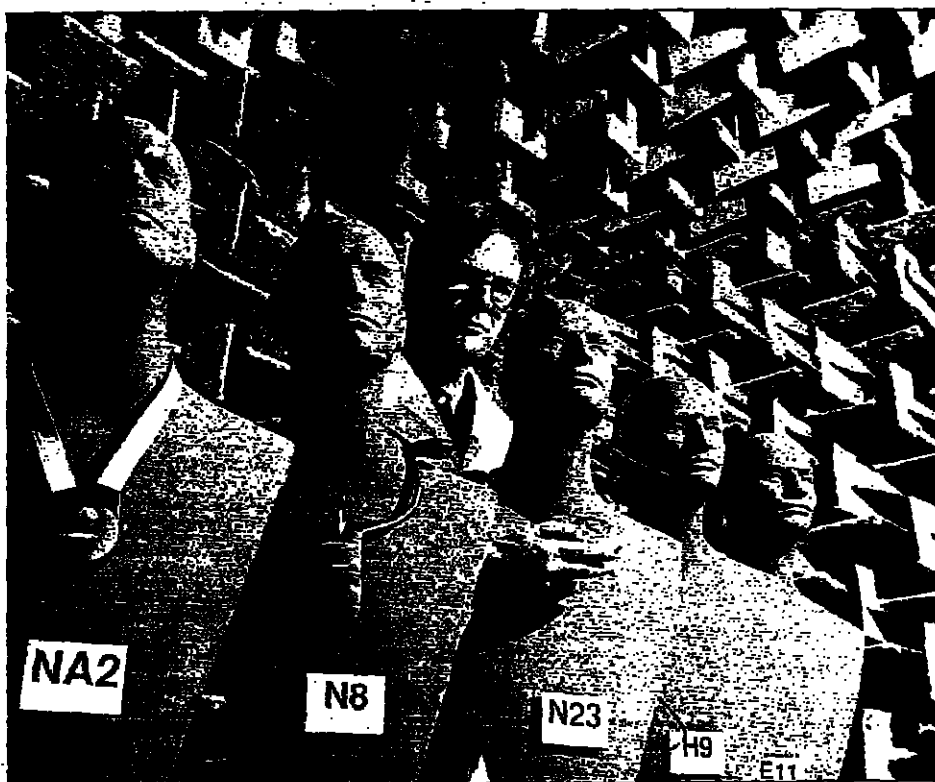
At least that is the prediction of Bell-Northern Research (BNR) — joint research and development subsidiary of Northern Telecom and Bell Canada, the telecom giants — which has been researching wireless communication devices for the future.

Jeff Fairless, product design manager for new terminals and services at BNR's corporate design group, says that years of testing and design on devices have led his group to conclude that users will want personal, highly flexible versions of the present mobile phone and pager.

These conclusions are part of an overall design project at BNR that has led to the development of something called the Orbitor, a pocket-size wireless device that uses advanced voice recognition and a touch-sensitive screen to deliver voice, messages and take notes.

Mr Fairless says that to succeed, devices in the future will need to be smaller and more personal than the present breed of electronic notepads.

"People attach a lot of value to a device that is personal — like an item of jewellery — so wearing a device is slightly different than carrying one," he says. "It must be functional



A researcher measures the acoustic properties of advanced personal hands-free devices

and make a statement about the person who wears it. It must also be something that they will be comfortable to be seen with."

He cites the growing number of American teenagers buying multi-coloured designer pagers to wear as fashion items as much as communication devices.

Orbitor, though it is not yet a product, does exist as a series of specifications, as a computer simulation and a series of physical mock-ups.

In the same way that the technologies needed by the American space programme of the 1960s to put a man on the Mercury and Gemini unmanned space missions, BNR is developing its Orbitor technologies so that they can be

used, where applicable, in other, slightly less ambitious projects as they come to fruition.

In the survey, many people said there were times when they did not want to be in ready contact.

Many existing mobile phone users complained that their existing systems were too intrusive and had often embarrassed them by ringing at inopportune moments. Mr Fairless says that people want to be able to pick and choose when they are available on their mobile system and to whom they will be available.

One proposed solution to the latter is a series of personal "availability modes" on the Orbitor. If you were in a board

meeting, for example, you could put the device in "meeting mode" so that you were interrupted only if telephone calls were received from certain pre-defined numbers or were designated emergency calls.

The system would digitally detect where the call was coming from, then route it either to the Orbitor or send the call to your voice mail system. Mr Fairless says this kind of choice and control is what prevents most mobile communications systems from being "personal" enough for people at the moment.

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Talent in the telecottage

Over the past 18 months, "telecottage" centres have been busy capitalising on the technological improvements of the last five years. The idea for the centres was imported from Scandinavia in the late 1980s and there are now 130 in Britain, mainly in rural areas. They provide a communal technological workplace where facilities can be used by people or companies on a hire basis.

"We might take in a contract from a large client to do work here, or sub-contract part of that work to a small business," says Jane Berry, manager of the Wren (Warwickshire Rural Enterprise Network) Telecottage, which deals with around 50 small businesses at Stoneleigh Park.

Each telecottage has its own focus, but they provide a marketplace where the IT professional can shop for work, receive subsidised IT training and services, and use the telecottage as an agent to place work and skills in the appropriate market.

Ms Berry says: "Someone with a portfolio career, who is perhaps employed for a couple of days a week and may then work as a freelance for a range of clients for the other three, needs a workplace." For those who need to sell their skills to potential employers, or

Clive Couldwell reports on technological centres that provide the skills and equipment that clients and workers need

clients, the telecottage offers a cost-effective way of acquiring technology and marketing expertise.

IT skills in a teleworking environment become resources bought from an electronic pool of talent as they are needed, an approach which fits in well with the way many companies are now streamlining their IT operations, placing them under the control of other companies.

Teleworking is one way of bringing in outside skills, and is particularly useful if the right kind of know-how is in short supply. "Benefits to the worker include a better lifestyle and access to work not available locally," says David Child, who manages Teleteam UK, an employment agency specialising in setting up and overseeing international teams of teleworkers.

"Offering key staff the option of teleworking is also being seen as a competitive advantage when recruiting them," says Alan Denbigh, executive director of the Telecottage Association. With these sorts of commercial and economic pressures forcing companies to

rethink how they structure their skill base, and the publicity surrounding the new concept of sharing of knowledge on the information superhighway, the idea of flexible working is proving attractive.

Ovum, the research company, predicts that by the turn of the century, American and European markets for "any computer work carried out outside company-owned premises" will have increased 30 times, from £700 million in 1992 to more than £21 billion.

Although this kind of working has not been taken up as strongly as many forecasters predicted, a growing band of IT professionals working from telecottage centres now includes programmers, systems analysts, management consultants and providers of data-entry services.

company has been recruiting teleworkers for about five years. It now employs a staff of 20. "We have met almost all of them online, rather than conventionally recruiting them through agencies," he says.

As software development becomes more complex, program functions are being split up into sets of complementary modules which will then slot together. Mr Hasted says: "It is therefore becoming more important for us to maintain a skills register that we can use to pull in the appropriate expertise." Ashmount Research's ability to recruit its IT staff online is a by-product of its business methods, but Mr Hasted says that candidates can be measured more accurately electronically.

"Our evaluations are done over a long period of time," he says. "We analyse conversations that we have about the product and the quality of the points being made, assessing whether people are trying to flaunt their knowledge, or understate it. Quite often we give them test work to do and see how it comes back."

Teleworker, the Telecottage Association's magazine (£3.95), runs a recruitment page for clients and employers seeking teleworkers. Contact Alan Denbigh on 0453 834874. Teleteam claims to be the only teleworking agency in the world. Agents represent the company and its members abroad.



Jan Kenyon, left, working on Wren's equipment with Jane Berry, the centre's manager

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POP ON FRIDAY: The burning sons of Atlanta ... Sleeper look forward to hotel rearrangements ... Dutch treat

God gave rock'n'roll to them

The Black Crowes are not just a rock band; they're claiming their birthright, as lead singer Chris Robinson tells David Sinclair

It is the middle of the afternoon in Dublin. The hotel room curtains are drawn shut. The bed is unmade. The small of joss stick is heavy. Frankly, it does not take a degree in social anthropology to recognise this scene as the natural habitat of the rock'n'roll musician on the road.

Even so, students of the species would be hard pushed to find a better example than Chris Robinson, singer, co-songwriter, occasional harmonica player and full-time mouthpiece of the Black

crowes. Twenty-eight years old, 6ft 2in tall and weighing less than ten stone, he is the image of spectral, nouveau-hippy chic. Both his wrists are decorated with silver bracelets. A silver skull dangles menacingly from a string round his neck. There is a big silver ring on his index finger and another on his thumb. His long, black hair frames a pale, beaky face with a scruffy little beard. His rail-thin legs are squeezed into a pair of tight blue jeans that flare out alarmingly from the knees.

“On a bad day, glory is beyond our reach. On a good day, we can part the sea.”

Three albums down the line, and with combined sales of the first two now in excess of ten million copies, his band's reputation as a gang of road-hardened, rabble-rousing, good 'ol boys from Atlanta, Georgia, precedes them. And Robinson is at pains to point out that, unlike all those clever, ironic British groups who can't get arrested in America at the moment, the Black Crowes walk like they talk it.

“Music is ancient,” he says. “It's spiritual. That's such a simple thing. And for us the only way we can keep track of ourselves and who we want to be is just by telling the truth. Being as honest and as real as we can be.”

“People always said that David Bowie was rock's charameleon. Well, either that or he was just the

triestest dude, who had to reinvent himself at every step of the way to stay young or whatever. But I don't want to invent myself. I want to be myself.”

For Robinson, authenticity is the key to his music: he claims it as his birthright, no less. “I grew up in the southern United States. And all those forms of music — jazz, blues, country, gospel, R&B and rock'n'roll — came from the south. And it's still there.”

Robinson and his guitar-playing younger brother Rich were born

into a musical household. Their father, Stan Robinson, was a professional folk and country musician who played the Grand Ole Opry. Although the old man was not a great source of encouragement — Chris had it drummed into him from an early age that he “couldn't carry a tune from a well to the house in a bucket” — the boys would nevertheless spend their weekends being ferried around the neighbourhood hootenannies and hoodowns.

As Rich remembers it, “Chris and I didn't decide to be in a band, we just assumed it.” Accordingly, the brothers played their first gig together in 1984 as Mr Crowe's Garden at a bar in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Six years later, the Black Crowes released their debut album *Shake Your Money Maker*.

Ask Chris to name the singers he admires and he comes up with a list that includes Bob Dylan, Keith Richards, Gram Parsons and Van Morrison. Ask about his favourite musicians in general and he mentions the Grateful Dead, the Byrds, John Coltrane, the Allman Brothers Band, the Replacements and Big Star.

The strange thing is that, despite his impeccable background and influences, reviewers and journalists will keep getting their wires



“Music is ancient,” says Black Crowes' Chris Robinson (centre, with rock'n'roll centre-parting and shades, but of course, “It is spiritual. That's such a simple thing”)

crossed and insist on comparing his spectacularly hoarse, bluesy style of singing to that of Rod Stewart when he was in the Jeff Beck Group and the Faces, and to Paul Rodgers of Free. Instead of being recognised as fearless upholders of a noble, southern roots-rock tradition, the Black Crowes have all too often been branded a 1970s retro-band.

“Oh, there's journalists who've never really listened to our records or come and seen us play,” Robinson says with an impatient wave of the hand. “They seem to think that ‘retro-rock’ is a genre, which I think is so pathetic. You know, if you're

really stuck in that I feel bad for you. If you don't understand the way that we look... if that's all you think that we are and you think that we've stolen all these things from somebody else's life, then you're the ones who need to look and see where you are, and see what things are deep and what are shallow.”

Later the same evening, the Crowes assemble backstage half-an-hour before showtime at the SFX, a 1,500-capacity hall at the rough end of Dublin. Every member of the band is 6ft or taller and, apart from

the workhorses — drummer Steve Gorman and percussionist Eric Bobo — they all look as if a high wind would blow them away. Having applied a fine coat of white pancake to his face, Chris Robinson looks like the principal ghost as he leads the spindly men onstage to a tumultuous welcome.

They open with an arresting barrage of “Thick N' Thin”, “No Speak No Slave” and “P25 London” — a song from each of their three albums — and although they are only in the preliminary stages of a marathon world tour, it quickly becomes apparent that this is a band operating close to the

peak of a considerable potential. For a solid two hours they pummel and pound their way through a cross-section of material, with particular emphasis on the blues and heavy, stoner-funk end of their repertoire.

Their policy is to change the set list every night, and several numbers have spaces set aside for jamming sequences. Tonight “Viser Time” takes off into a spiralling guitar duel between Rich and Marc Ford that recalls the heyday of the Allman Brothers Band. It's almost good enough to take your mind off the fact that, for the last 20 minutes or so of the show, apart from the

front of house spots, the entire stage lighting rig has broken down.

“On a good day, we can part the sea,” Robinson says later. “And on a bad day, glory is beyond our reach. But you've got to keep looking for it. You have to trust everyone on the stage for it to happen. By the time we get to London it'll all be more in place.”

● America is available on American/Reprise Records. The Black Crowes play the Albert Hall, SW7 071-589 8212, Jan 28 and 29; Guildhall, Portsmouth (0705 52535), Jan 30; Royal Concert Hall, Nottingham (0902 452636), Jan 31; Sheffield City Hall, (0742 735295), Feb 1

And so to Sleeper, perchance to dream

When you have just seen your new single go in at No 16, and the world is your prairie oyster, it's nice to get together with a like mind for a bit of girl talk

The green-faced walt totters to the bar, and speaks the language of Hangover. “Bloody Mary, please. I warn you, I may need 15 or 16 of these before I can talk without groaning.” Her skin is translucent, her eyes screwed against the power of the midday winter sun, and there is a smudge of half-hearted make-up on her eyelids, indicative of a) being too drunk last night to wash it off, or b) too frail and icy this morning to do more than dab gently with an eyeliner pencil, before tottering her head against the mirror and giving up.

Louise Werner, however, is suffering with glee — after all, it's not every day a girl hears that her single's gone into the charts at No 16, and that she'll be on *Top of the Pops*. And if the charts were a living creature, they too would be gleefully hungover this morning as “Inbetweeners” by Sleeper is the first Classic Pop Single of 1995, and raises one's hopes about the rest of the year to the size of the EC food mountain.

“I'm glad we're going to be famous this year,” Werner says, carefully sitting down. “It means we'll never have to stay in guest houses again. Really, the most bizarre people run guest-houses — at this one we stayed in Birmingham, the son of the woman who owned it had a huge knife scar across his neck, from one side to the other. We kind of ran away from him.”

“Andy [Sleeper's drummer] went to his room, and there was already someone in his bed. He wouldn't leave. He said he liked it and he was comfortable and we could shove off.”

“And you can't be rock-starish in boarding houses, can you? I mean, what is there to wreck? They have those old Seventies tellies that are so huge you'd do yourself an injury if you tried to chuck them out of the window; it would be too pathetic to trash a Teasmade; so all that's left in the end is getting those little cartons of UHT milk and crushing them with your hands until they explode and splatter everywhere.”

Previous interviewers — curiously, all male — have picked up with a vengeance on Werner's pronouncements on sex and female sexuality. It's the latest matter of lyrics like “Come and suck down meat with me / until it makes you feverish / I love to watch you

eating stuff / Do you kiss your mother with those lips?” and interviews where Werner will say: “There's this view that women want romantic sex — and they just want good sex.” But this is all cool and good and needs to be said, because whatever certain circles believe about women's sexual emancipation, there are still articles in magazines telling you to giggle at men's jokes and never go to bed on the first date. You can make tons of exciting new friends that way, and it saves money on a string of nervous, twitching dinner-dates. Besides, it's fun.

So Werner is tired of talking about sex, and so we turn to cysitis. “We're just talking about women's things, aren't we?” Werner says. “But cysitis is a living death, it really is. Nobody ever talks about it, but if I was faced with a choice between having my arms removed and getting cysitis over again, I'd wave goodbye to my arms quite happily. Er, except I couldn't, because I wouldn't have any arms.”

“But the worst, the absolute painful worst, is getting it on tour when there isn't a bath in the room, just a shower. Almost as bad are the remedies people recommend. Bicarbonate of soda and ground ginger. Urgh. People turn into sadists when you have cysitis — the things they try and get you to take, and you take them because you think you're dying. Really, it's almost enough to make you give up sex.” She gives a saucy grin. *Monks three miles away melt.*

So is Werner ready to be famous? “Yeah, I still feel vaguely uncomfortable when people ask me for my autograph — it's like, I'm me, you don't want my signature — but I'm looking forward to going on *This Morning*, with Richard and Judy. They fascinate me. You can always tell when they've had a row the night before, and Judy still hates Richard's guts and gives him all the difficult things to do, like taste the Curried Fruit Salad, or hold a hyperactive puppy. I love that public veneer that can be seen to be cracked. Flawed stars are ace.”

Unfortunately then, by that reckoning, Werner is not ace at all.

● “Inbetweeners” is out now on Indolent Records, with the album. *Smart*, to follow at the end of January. *Sleeper's* tour starts on February 13



CAITLIN MORAN

NEW ALBUMS: Pure gold from the nether lands; plus pearls of punk

BETTIE SERVEERT

Lamprey (Beggars Banquet BBO 169)
A SPECTACULARLY unpleasant, cat-like creature that leads on the blood of other fish, the lamprey seems an odd choice of animal to adopt as the title of a record, especially one as gracefully executed as the second album by Dutch quartet Bettie Serveert.

But even when the band is negotiating passages of near-stillness or conjuring a mood of apparent tenderness, there is a distinctive thread of tension lurking beneath the surface calm.

Canadian-born singer Carol van Dijk has one of those voice-wait voices more commonly associated with Irish women called Dolores or Sinéad. She can sound sad, steely, vulnerable and violent all in a single song — and frequently does — while, behind her, guitarist Peter Visser steers the numbers from delicate opening verse to volcanic climax and back again.

For an album proceeding from a basic indie-rock guitar-band format — give or take the hint of a string section on “D. Feathers” — *Lamprey* is an extraordinarily haunting musical experience. From the bouncy pop of “Ray Ray Rain” to the apocalyptic “Totally Freaked Out” it's the stuff that dreams are made of: some of them sweet and forlorn, others deep and murky.

VARIOUS ARTISTS

The Best Punk Album In The World... Ever! (Virgin VTD 42)
COULD you imagine a Mersey beat album without the Beatles? Or a round-up of guitar heroes that omitted Jimi Hendrix? By the same token it's hard to imagine any punk compilation without a track by the Clash, let alone one calling itself *The Best Punk Album In The World... Ever!* (Come to think of it, wasn't the first Clash LP the best punk album ever?) It is a shame that this 48-track selection has been blighted by such a glaring deficiency, since in all other regards it provides a tremendous pop overview of punk. Just about everyone else who

Bettie's stove is cooking



Haunting Carol van Dijk and the boys of Bettie Serveert

made a mark during those wonderfully turbulent times here — the Sex Pistols, Buzzcocks, the Damned, the Adverts, the Jam, Siouxsie & the Banshees, the Stranglers, the Skids, Magazine, the Ramones — and nearly all of them are represented by the right songs. The picture is rounded out by incursions from bit players like Bow Wow Wow (“C30, C60, C90”) and the Flying Lizards (“Money”), and fellow travellers such as the Only Ones (“Another Girl, Another Planet”), Iggy Pop (“The Passenger”), Killing Joke (“Eighties”) and the Motors (“Dancing The Night Away”).

Naturally, the nostalgic re-

marketing of punk as yet another rock heritage item is a travesty of the movement's original ideals and vigorously to be deplored. But what a fantastic collection of old songs this is.

THE CHIEFTAINS

The Long Black Veil (RCA 74321 25167)
HAVING called in favours from old drinking buddies such as Mick Jagger, Van Morrison and Tom Jones, and recruited various other obvious candidates to the cause — among them Sinéad O'Connor, Mark Knopfler and Marianne Faithfull — Irish trad-folk minstrels the Chieftains have come up with the most readily marketable album of their long and ever-green career.

Be that as it may, some of these collaborations are, frankly, a bit of a mess. When “The Rocky Road To Dublin”, featuring all of the Rolling Stones, gives way to an impromptu blast of “Satisfaction” it sounds as if someone has suddenly opened the door to an adjacent recording studio. And Ry Cooder's vocal on “Coast Of Malabar” is simply terrible.

But Sling manages a surprisingly credible version of a traditional Gaelic-language song called “Mo Ghile Mear”, and Cooder's slide guitar playing on “Dunmore Lassies” produces a wondrous combination of Celtic reel and country blues.

NEW WAVES

Beauty and the beat

Yesterday reworked today becomes the sound of tomorrow

As our streets are laid with cables in preparation for the much-touted information infobahn, how will the unadorned voice make itself heard above the babel of the future? Two clues have fallen on to my doormat.

Kiss Closed My Eyes by Laurel MacDonal comes from Canada on Improbable Music. *Murder Ballads (Drift)* by M.J. Harris and *Martin Bates* is released in Italy on Musica Maxima Magnetica. The music, though, originated in England. Both explore archaic song forms, setting solo voices against electronic soundscapes.

This unsettling contrast of exposed humanity and studio technology creates moods that take us back — further than any bogus traditionalism — to the deeper meanings of the song lyrics. Harris (of Lull and Scorn) and Bates (from Eyeless in Gaza) work with old murder ballads such as the blood-thirsty “Lucy Wan”, and a disturbing, *Nightmare on Elm Street*-style tale of “Long Lankin”, a character who lives in the moss, tortures a baby in order to lure his mother downstairs, then kills her. On “The Fowler”, Bates sings eerie glissandi over sounds that evoke the creaking shift of giant ice floes.

MacDonal possesses a voice of real beauty: pure and strong with an edge of harshness. On “Kyrie” she sings the Greek chant into the natural echo chamber of an underground water reservoir; on “Mo Chubhrachan”, a Gaelic cradle song, the words hover over a mist of electronically treated breath sounds and subliminal voices created by producer Philip Strong.

TOP TEN ALBUMS

- 1 Carry On Up The Charts Beautiful South (Go! Discs)
- 2 The Colour Of My Love Celine Dion (Epic)
- 3 Dummy Portishead (Go! Discs)
- 4 Definitely Maybe Oasis (Creation)
- 5 Always & Forever Eternal (EMI)
- 6 Paradise Blur (Food)
- 7 Cross Roads — The Best Of Bon Jovi (Jambou)
- 8 Crocodile Shoes Jimmy Nail (East West)
- 9 University Throwing Muses (4AD)
- 10 Steam East 17 (London)

Compiled by MIB

DAVID SINCLAIR

DAVID TOOP

McMillan hits out to fashion recovery

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

ALTHOUGH a maiden Test century by Brian McMillan placed South Africa in a strong position on the first day of the game against Pakistan in Johannesburg yesterday, he had to share individual honours with a jet-lagged fast bowler.

McMillan's unbeaten 106 was largely responsible for his side recovering to reach 354 for seven after being 168 for five in mid-afternoon. But South Africa's position would have been even better had Amir Nazir not taken two wickets with successive deliveries late in the day.

Nazir had flown into Johannesburg only 90 minutes before the start of play as a replacement for the injured Waqar Younis, forced out by a hamstring strain and pains in his lower back. A delay in clearing customs meant Nazir

dispatched by a yorke. But Nazir was denied the chance of any further heroics by his second attack of cramp, which forced him to leave the field nine overs before the close.

South Africa were soon in trouble after winning the toss. Wasim Akram had Rudolf Steyn caught behind from a thinned leg glance with only a single scored, and although Gary Kirsten and John Commins added 54 in the next nine over Aqib Javed Commins "through the gate" for 13 and had Daryll Cullinan caught behind before he had scored to leave South Africa struggling at 59 for three.

Kirsten and Cronje took the score to 106 for three at lunch and their partnership was worth 79 before both were claimed by the left-arm seamer, Kabir Khan, who was playing in only his second Test.

Kabir removed Cronje in the seventh over of the afternoon session as he was beginning to dominate. Cronje had reached 41 off 65 balls, having hit seven fours, when he failed to get on top of a cut and guided the ball straight into the hands of Asif Mujtaba in the gully.

Kirsten reached an accomplished half-century with a pull for four, his ninth boundary, and hit two more fours before becoming Kabir's second victim. The left-hander also fell to an attempted cut shot, top-edging to Amir Sohail at second slip.

However, Pakistan lacked the fire-power to press home their advantage, and Jonty Rhodes and McMillan hit their side out of trouble.

Rhodes, who might well have lost his place in the side after a poor series against New Zealand, scored 72 from 128 deliveries before falling to Nazir, while the powerful McMillan played some thrilling shots which brought him 14 boundaries, as he raced to his hundred from 146 balls — his previous best Test score was 98.

McMillan deserved his stroke of luck shortly before the close when he was bowled by one of 19 no-balls sent down by Wasim. Of the 58 extras recorded during the day, 31 were no-balls.

The bowling figures show three players with incomplete overs, a statistical freak caused by Nazir twice breaking down after starting an over, which had to be finished by Aqib Javed and Kabir Khan respectively.

SCOREBOARD

SOUTH AFRICA: First Innings
G Kirsten c Sohail b Kabir 62
P J R Steyn c Mohi b Wasim 19
J B Commins b Aqib 10
D J Cullinan c Mohi b Aqib 13
W J Cronje c Mujtaba b Kabir 41
J N Rhodes c Inzamam b Nazir 102
B M McMillan not out 106
D J Richardson b Nazir 0
C E Steyn not out 0
Extras (b 4, lb 17, w 6, no ball 31) 58
Total (7 wickets) 354
F 5 de Villiers and A A Donald to bat.
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-1, 2-55, 3-59, 4-108, 5-168, 6-325, 7-325.

SCORING: South Africa 22-4-78-1 (nb 19); 22-4-91-2 (nb 5, w 5); 22-4-108-3 (nb 5); 22-4-125-4 (nb 5); 22-4-142-5 (nb 5); 22-4-159-6 (nb 5); 22-4-176-7 (nb 5); 22-4-193-8 (nb 5); 22-4-210-9 (nb 5); 22-4-227-10 (nb 5); 22-4-244-11 (nb 5); 22-4-261-12 (nb 5); 22-4-278-13 (nb 5); 22-4-295-14 (nb 5); 22-4-312-15 (nb 5); 22-4-329-16 (nb 5); 22-4-346-17 (nb 5); 22-4-363-18 (nb 5); 22-4-380-19 (nb 5); 22-4-397-20 (nb 5); 22-4-414-21 (nb 5); 22-4-431-22 (nb 5); 22-4-448-23 (nb 5); 22-4-465-24 (nb 5); 22-4-482-25 (nb 5); 22-4-499-26 (nb 5); 22-4-516-27 (nb 5); 22-4-533-28 (nb 5); 22-4-550-29 (nb 5); 22-4-567-30 (nb 5); 22-4-584-31 (nb 5); 22-4-601-32 (nb 5); 22-4-618-33 (nb 5); 22-4-635-34 (nb 5); 22-4-652-35 (nb 5); 22-4-669-36 (nb 5); 22-4-686-37 (nb 5); 22-4-703-38 (nb 5); 22-4-720-39 (nb 5); 22-4-737-40 (nb 5); 22-4-754-41 (nb 5); 22-4-771-42 (nb 5); 22-4-788-43 (nb 5); 22-4-805-44 (nb 5); 22-4-822-45 (nb 5); 22-4-839-46 (nb 5); 22-4-856-47 (nb 5); 22-4-873-48 (nb 5); 22-4-890-49 (nb 5); 22-4-907-50 (nb 5); 22-4-924-51 (nb 5); 22-4-941-52 (nb 5); 22-4-958-53 (nb 5); 22-4-975-54 (nb 5); 22-4-992-55 (nb 5); 22-4-1009-56 (nb 5); 22-4-1026-57 (nb 5); 22-4-1043-58 (nb 5); 22-4-1060-59 (nb 5); 22-4-1077-60 (nb 5); 22-4-1094-61 (nb 5); 22-4-1111-62 (nb 5); 22-4-1128-63 (nb 5); 22-4-1145-64 (nb 5); 22-4-1162-65 (nb 5); 22-4-1179-66 (nb 5); 22-4-1196-67 (nb 5); 22-4-1213-68 (nb 5); 22-4-1230-69 (nb 5); 22-4-1247-70 (nb 5); 22-4-1264-71 (nb 5); 22-4-1281-72 (nb 5); 22-4-1298-73 (nb 5); 22-4-1315-74 (nb 5); 22-4-1332-75 (nb 5); 22-4-1349-76 (nb 5); 22-4-1366-77 (nb 5); 22-4-1383-78 (nb 5); 22-4-1400-79 (nb 5); 22-4-1417-80 (nb 5); 22-4-1434-81 (nb 5); 22-4-1451-82 (nb 5); 22-4-1468-83 (nb 5); 22-4-1485-84 (nb 5); 22-4-1502-85 (nb 5); 22-4-1519-86 (nb 5); 22-4-1536-87 (nb 5); 22-4-1553-88 (nb 5); 22-4-1570-89 (nb 5); 22-4-1587-90 (nb 5); 22-4-1604-91 (nb 5); 22-4-1621-92 (nb 5); 22-4-1638-93 (nb 5); 22-4-1655-94 (nb 5); 22-4-1672-95 (nb 5); 22-4-1689-96 (nb 5); 22-4-1706-97 (nb 5); 22-4-1723-98 (nb 5); 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22-4-7996-467 (nb 5); 22-4-8013-468 (nb 5); 22-4-8030-469 (nb 5); 22-4-8047-470 (nb 5); 22-4-8064-471 (nb 5); 22-4-8081-472 (nb 5); 22-4-8098-473 (nb 5); 22-4-8115-474 (nb 5); 22-4-8132-475 (nb 5); 22-4-8149-476 (nb 5); 22-4-8166-477 (nb 5); 22-4-8183-478 (nb 5); 22-4-8200-479 (nb 5); 22-4-8217-480 (nb 5); 22-4-8234-481 (nb 5); 22-4-8251-482 (nb 5); 22-4-8268-483 (nb 5); 22-4-8285-484 (nb 5); 22-4-8302-485 (nb 5); 22-4-8319-486 (nb 5); 22-4-8336-487 (nb 5); 22-4-8353-488 (nb 5); 22-4-8370-489 (nb 5); 22-4-8387-490 (nb 5); 22-4-8404-491 (nb 5); 22-4-8421-492 (nb 5); 22-4-8438-493 (nb 5); 22-4-8455-494 (nb 5); 22-4-8472-495 (nb 5); 22-4-8489-496 (nb 5); 22-4-8506-497 (nb 5); 22-4-8523-498 (nb 5); 22-4-8540-499 (nb 5); 22-4-8557-500 (nb 5); 22-4-8574-501 (nb 5); 22-4-8591-502 (nb 5); 22-4-8608-503 (nb 5); 22-4-8625-504 (nb 5); 22-4-8642-505 (nb 5); 22-4-8659-506 (nb 5); 22-4-8676-507 (nb 5); 22-4-8693-508 (nb 5); 22-4-8710-509 (nb 5); 22-4-8727-510 (nb 5); 22-4-8744-511 (nb 5); 22-4-8761-512 (nb 5); 22-4-8778-513 (nb 5); 22-4-8795-514 (nb 5); 22-4-8812-515 (nb 5); 22-4-8829-516 (nb 5); 22-4-8846-517 (nb 5); 22-4-8863-518 (nb 5); 22-4-8880-519 (nb 5); 22-4-8897-520 (nb 5); 22-4-8914-521 (nb 5); 22-4-8931-522 (nb 5); 22-4-8948-523 (nb 5); 22-4-8965-524 (nb 5); 22-4-8982-525 (nb 5); 22-4-8999-526 (nb 5); 22-4-9016-527 (nb 5); 22-4-9033-528 (nb 5); 22-4-9050-529 (nb 5); 22-4-9067-530 (nb 5); 22-4-9084-531 (nb 5); 22-4-9101-532 (nb 5); 22-4-9118-533 (nb 5); 22-4-9135-534 (nb 5); 22-4-9152-535 (nb 5); 22-4-9169-536 (nb 5); 22-4-9186-537 (nb 5); 22-4-9203-538 (nb 5); 22-4-9220-539 (nb 5); 22-4-9237-540 (nb 5); 22-4-9254-541 (nb 5); 22-4-9271-542 (nb 5); 22-4-9288-543 (nb 5); 22-4-9305-544 (nb 5); 22-4-9322-545 (nb 5); 22-4-9339-546 (nb 5); 22-4-9356-547 (nb 5); 22-4-9373-548 (nb 5); 22-4-9390-549 (nb 5); 22-4-9407-550 (nb 5); 22-4-9424-551 (nb 5); 22-4-9441-552 (nb 5); 22-4-9458-553 (nb 5); 22-4-9475-554 (nb 5); 22-4-9492-555 (nb 5); 22-4-9509-556 (nb 5); 22-4-9526-557 (nb 5); 22-4-9543-558 (nb 5); 22-4-9560-559 (nb 5); 22-4-9577-560 (nb 5); 22-4-9594-561 (nb 5); 22-4-9611-562 (nb 5); 22-4-9628-563 (nb 5); 22-4-9645-564 (nb 5); 22-4-9662-565 (nb 5); 22-4-9679-566 (nb 5); 22-4-9696-567 (nb 5); 22-4-9713-568 (nb 5); 22-4-9730-569 (nb 5); 22-4-9747-570 (nb 5); 22-4-9764-571 (nb 5); 22-4-9781-572 (nb 5); 22-4-9798-573 (nb 5); 22-4-9815-574 (nb 5); 22-4-9832-575 (nb

Master craftsman back where he belongs

This is not the time to mince words. Goodness knows, the span of a rugby player's career is brief enough and, when recognition is deserved, it should be forthcoming. Not with sentimental regret after he has departed the scene, but while he is in the creative fullness of his prime. So it must be said, with his supremely articulate performance for the Barbarians against South Africa still fresh in the memory, that Robert Jones, the Wales scrum half, is a true master of his craft and, in the expression of the position's definitive, textbook skills, the best of his generation.

He can pass with length, accuracy and speed to both left and right when most scrum halves favour one or the other. The reverse pass, which hardly any other scrum half possesses, is another piece in his armoury. Beautifully balanced and firm, he kicks with either foot which, again, few can do. So



Gerald Davies looks forward to a successful return for Robert Jones as the Wales scrum half in Paris

close to the powerhouse, it is essential to be an astute reader of the game. Jones, 29, has not been consistently recognised. If he has demonstrated his gifts for ten years since he began as a schoolboy with Swansea, he has only intermittently been able to do so within the Wales team. He has shone through while most around him have been but pale shadows yet for all this, upon his shoulders and that of his position, has fallen the weighty question of how Welsh fortunes could best be improved when inadequacies were more obvious elsewhere.

Tomorrow, Jones has been selected for the 49th time for Wales when they play France at Parc des Princes. But for the vagaries of selection, this figure could have been more and would by now have made him the holder of the record number of Welsh caps, still in the possession of J. P. R. Williams, with 55. By Jones's calculation, and not including the times he has

always find immediate or universal approval. But, two years later, in 1986, he was playing for Wales. "There have been reasons why I've been left out in the past, but knowing the reasons doesn't take away the disappointment," he said. "I was dropped for the first time in New Zealand in 1983. Jonathan Griffiths took my place and continued at scrum half when the European season began. In 1990, I couldn't go to Namibia because of pneumonia, which meant that Chris Bridges played for the next six months. And, in the last 18 months, my kind of play is not what the Welsh team was thought to need."

Rugby, like all sports, can suffer from too much analysis. There are too many theoreticians attempting to rationalise the whys and wherefores of a sport that delights, more often than not, in its irrationality and variety. For every one opinion, there are half a dozen more. Robert Jones has suffered too much from such theories. "Of too many people who think they know what's what," as he puts it, aware that he has more experience of the position at this level than anyone else in Wales bar Gareth Edwards. What else could the coaches know?



Jones, training with the Wales squad yesterday, hones his passing before the encounter with France tomorrow

I admit, when I was first left out and listening to the advice from all and sundry, I began to change my game," he said. "If the selectors wanted me to charge at the back row and take them on, then I would do so. "But I wasn't comfortable. It wasn't my game. In those circumstances I seek advice from Geoff Davies, my former schoolteacher at Cwmataw. And he said: 'Forget what others say. Play the

David Miller says means now exist to enforce rugby's more murky laws Cards should strengthen referee's hand

The start of the five nations' championship tomorrow sees the introduction of the controversial disciplinary yellow and red card system, already begun in domestic rugby two weeks ago. The potential benefits seem to be widely misunderstood and unappreciated.

It is not just a question of whether the use by referees of more visible, unequivocal measures, as in football, will enable them to control better the element of excessive violence that is so destructive to the public image of the game. But need, in the eyes of most, is abundantly clear.

Much more, however, it is a matter of whether rugby referees will have the wit and the willingness to utilise the system to curb repetitive reaches of the laws, such as fside, and thereby improve the game for players and spectators. This aspect is perhaps less instantly obvious, yet arguably even more important in a game so often so confused and confounded, by the complexity of its laws.

Don Rutherford, the technical director of the Rugby Football Union (RFU), believes the influence of an improved disciplinary system is fundamental to the development of rugby as a world game. "If rugby is to be played well," Rutherford said, "it must have players in onside positions. That's the area [the old system can influence], referee is there to help 30 players enjoy themselves. I'm optimistic that the threat [of a slow card] will restrain the layers - that we won't see massive numbers of cautions and sendings off, but the layers will realise they have to watch it."



Scott, left, playing for Orrell at Leicester last weekend, was the first player to be shown a red card in the first division of the Courage Clubs Championship

five nations' championship. England initially resisted but, when the proposal was carried, decided to extend the experiment to the senior domestic league divisions. On January 7, David Cleary, the Orrell forward, enjoyed the dubious privilege of receiving English rugby's first yellow card. The practice has operated in France for some time with, significantly, a cumulative totting-up process for individuals and teams. This is conspicuously absent from the five nations' championship and Courage league.

The card system applies to Law 26: Foul play, which concerns not merely violence but three issues - first, obstruction; second, unfair play (technical) and repetitions; and third, misconduct or dangerous play. Rugby, even more than football, being a game in which fierce physical collision is a central factor, the borderline between fair and foul can

sometimes be hard to define. Brutality, however, is mostly self-evident, as with the infamous occasions of the past two seasons which resulted in grave injuries to England players; to de Glanville, against New Zealand, and Calland, against South Africa, with the subsequent sending-off of Rodber for retaliation after the latter offence. Red cards are unlikely substantially to change the attitude or performance of referees, always assuming such incidents are seen. It is unarguable, moreover, that greater willingness to send off those guilty of brutality would rapidly reduce its occurrence. Will Carling, the England captain, and Brian Moore, the hooker, are in no doubt.

"If there is conclusive proof that a player did something [violent], they shouldn't play," Carling insists. "Every incident is well catalogued by video," Moore adds, "and needs dealing with in a serious manner. In that respect, there is a problem in the public's perception of the game's discipline."

Both England players are open minded, while simultaneously expressing some doubt, wondering how the would soon influence selectors if a colleague was repeatedly losing matches by indiscipline. There ought to be 22-yard penalties for foul play irrespective of where the infringement occurs, if there is not a penalty try."

Carling and Moore plead for better player representation in the game's administration, a development of paramount importance in any modern sport and something hotly debated at the centenary congress of the International Olympic Committee this year. "Players know what happened, and are the severest critics of each other," Carling said. "With player representation, the South African [who injured Calland] would have been banned," Moore agrees. "I can't think of any walk of life where decision-makers for the affairs of the under-30s are appointed from among those

'The players will realise that they have got to watch it'

WORD-WATCHING

Answers from page 44
ALUDAL
Marshy, of marshes, especially [of plants] growing in marshy ground, from the Latin *palus*, *paludis* a marsh. "The proposed series of terms runs thus - Paludal: plants of marshy ground, roots of which are in water or wet ground most part of the year, or constantly."
QUEBRADA
A mountain stream in South America, also a ravine. Spanish, the feminine of *quebrado*, the past participle of *quebrar* to break, the broken feminine thing. "Next morning I rode out on my mule, to take my last dip in the quebrada of the Loseria, which is a rapid in a beautiful little rivulet, distant from Panama about three miles."
JINGOCANDY
Some kind of confection or other, *hapax legomenon* from James Joyce, *Ulysses* 1922, excerpt from *ringo* a variant of *ringo* candy. "Hot herringgips, green mugs of sack, omelettes, sugar of roses, marchpane, gooseberryed pigeons, jingocandies." They sound delicious.
A'ANGA
The monetary unit of Tonga, from the native word, *The Times* 1966. "Tonga has decided against calling its new decimal currency unit the dollar because the native word, *tola*, also means a pig's snout, the soft end of a coconut, or, in vulgar language, a mouth or similar orifice. The new unit, to be introduced next year, will be called *pa'anga*, which has only two alternative meanings - a coin-shaped seed and, not surprisingly, money."

SOLUTION TO WINNING CHESS MOVE
Qd7+! Kxh7 2 Rb4 mating

Offiah seeks double century

By Christopher Irvine

MARTIN OFFIAH whizzes past milestones as swiftly as he goes round defenders. Another looms for him tonight at Bradford where the Wigan and Great Britain rugby league wing will be seeking the four tries he requires to become only the second player to score 200 touchdowns in the first division. Ellery Hanley being the first.

In four seasons at Widnes, Offiah scored 120 league tries. Although injuries have restricted his productivity at Wigan since he was bought for a world record £440,000 in 1992, he has managed 76 since then, 22 in 16 championship appearances this season.

If Regal Trophy matches are included, Offiah, 28, is the leading try-scorer of the season, with 30, and is happy with his game. "Instead of doing the things people kept telling me to do, I've returned to a style I feel happy and confident with, rather than running across the field and trying to blast my way through," he said.

Wigan's last championship win at Oldham, three years ago, came in the game in which Offiah scored his first try for the club. It is far from impossible he could score four tonight for he has done so on nine previous occasions and has twice scored five.

Bradford Northern, although lying in third place, are not the side that, in company with Warrington, pushed Wigan to the limit in the championship last season. A win for Wigan would nudge them back to the top, ahead of Leeds.

Widnes are hopeful that their Great Britain international, Andy Currier, will be able to return to them on loan after a troubled 18 months with Featherstone Rovers and the recent collapse of a deal which would have taken the centre to Warrington.

Jumbo Sports Crossword

TWELVE readers have won prizes in The Times Jumbo Sports Christmas Crossword. The winners of the first six correct entries drawn have won autographed copies of *Letting Rip, the fast-bowling threat from Lille to Waqar*, by Simon Wilde; the six runners-up have won copies of *Visions of Golf, a celebration of the work of the Allsport agency*. The closing date for entries was January 14.

The winners were: G Copley, Wadsworth, Doncaster; Jane Wintersgill, London W9; R Patterson, Scarborough; J Medley, Worcester; J R Beard, Lyttelton Maltravers, Dorset; Chris Lawrence, London SE10.

The runners-up were: M Nicholson, Lincoln; M P Young, Highbridge, Somerset; Michael Moran, Penrith, Cumbria; Eddie May, Thorpe Bay, Essex; D M Roberts, Hall Green, Birmingham; A P Sparks, Pewsey, Wiltshire.

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Oliver Holt reflects on how a driver's comeback from the brink of death has lifted Formula One

Wheel turns full circle in revival of Wendlinger

There have been few fairy tales to lighten the spirits of the followers of Formula One motor racing in the past 12 months, but one came true this week. Flucked from an accident that marked one of the lowest points of the traumatic 1994 season, it reached a happy ending yesterday in a factory 20 miles from Zurich.

The first of five groups of journalists were led up several flights of stairs to the top floor of the Sauber team's headquarters in Hinwil and into a long gallery. At one end, two figures stood gazing over an expanse of whiteness, watching a hovering helicopter whip the snow into a storm of white powder. One was Heinz-Harald Frentzen, the other, Karl Wendlinger.

Everyone had known for weeks that Frentzen had resisted overtures from Williams and McLaren in order to stay with the Swiss team. Wendlinger's position had been less certain as he fought to overcome injuries sustained when he crashed during practice for the Monaco Grand Prix in May, an accident that left him in a deep coma.

Now, though, it was decided. A drive with Sauber and its new engine partner, Ford, is one of the most coveted seats in Formula One this season.

Christian Fittipaldi, the Brazilian, was known to be keen to secure the place for himself but Wendlinger had proved his fitness and Sauber stood by him. The decision confirmed an astonishing comeback.

Wendlinger, 26, smiled as he eased himself into a chair. His movements are slower than before and he walks with a limp. His facial expressions seem intangibly different, too, and he remembers nothing of his accident, nor of another race a fortnight earlier. But he has retained his easy charm and wit, his intelligence and his desire to compete. "All I ever wanted, even when I was in the hospital, was to drive again," he said.

That seemed an improbable prospect from the moment Wendlinger's Sauber-Mercedes slooped across the track in Monte Carlo and smashed into a barrier in front of horrified observers watching from their yachts. When the extent of his head injuries became apparent, it plunged a sport already reeling from the deaths of Roland Ratzenberger and Ayrton Senna at Imola a fortnight before even deeper into crisis and acted as a catalyst for sweeping rule changes.

Regular bulletins from the Princess Grace Hospital in



Wendlinger, left, fully recovered from the horrific crash that left him in a coma after his Sauber-Mercedes ran into a barrier in practice for the Monaco Grand Prix last May



Monaco in the hours after the crash revealed Wendlinger's brain was swelling. Most people expected him to die. When he clung to life, the cynics said they were keeping him alive until the race was over. He lay in a coma for 19 days and gradually the signs became more encouraging. Eventually, he was moved to hospital in Austria and was brought back to consciousness. He left hospital at the end of July and the slow process of rehabilitation began.

All the time Peter Sauber, the team owner, insisted that

Wendlinger, who had been more than a match for Michael Schumacher in their days in the Mercedes Sportscar team, would reclaim his drive when he was fit. His loyalty spurred the driver's recovery.

"At first, I just had to try to get back to some sort of normal life," Wendlinger said. "But I was so far away from normal life that even simple things were a great effort. I had to learn to walk again, to do everything again. Every day, I was in therapy. Then, when I left hospital, I started to do some sports. At first, my idea of sport was just

walking around a bit with my girlfriend in the village where I live. Then I went to the Willy Dugli clinic in Austria and did a little bit of bicycling and some work in the gym."

The constant support I had from the team was very important because it meant I never lost motivation. I always had the possibility that when I was fit again I could drive the car. Mr Sauber assured me of that from the beginning. Now, I am almost there. There are still a few things I have to improve but I will be fine by the beginning of the season. The only hiccup in his

CAR 95

"I think I make an 'okay' road car driver, but you would probably find a chauffeur, somebody who does it for a job, would make a better driver than me"

David Coulthard tells Oliver Holt of his likes and hates of off-track driving tomorrow in *The Times*

SPORT IN BRIEF

Halliday's return should strengthen St Albans

ST ALBANS, who defend their national indoor club hockey title at Crystal Palace today, will be strengthened by the return of Andy Halliday from injury, although the absence of Tim Ginn, who is still unfit, leaves them slightly below their full potential (Sydney Friskin writes). Halliday leads a side whose fighting qualities were in evidence when they qualified for the final stages against heavy odds last month.

To qualify from Pool B for tonight's final, St Albans will have to get past Barford Tigers and Stourport, who are both well stocked with talent and experience. Although Hull cannot be taken lightly, the top position in Pool A seems a matter for dispute between East Grinstead and Old Loughbournians, who contested the final in 1993. Old Loughbournians have yet to win this title although, with the wealth of talent at their disposal, this could just be their year.

Jackson strikes gold

JUDO: Simon Jackson, from Rochdale, led the British medal challenge at the world championships for the visually impaired in Colorado Springs yesterday by taking his second world title to add to his two Paralympic and two European titles (Alix Ramsay writes). The win, in the 78kg category, maintained Jackson's seven-year unbeaten run. Ian Rose, 22, from High Wycombe, won the 86kg class while, in the women's competition, Anita Hall, from Wales, won the 56kg.

England close to victory

CRICKET: The England Under-19 team is well placed with a day to go in its match against the Leeward Islands in Montserrat. After gaining a first-innings lead of 76, England reduced the Islanders to 73 for 6 at the close on the second day. Marcus Trescothick, the captain, scored 81 in 189 minutes and Alex Morris contributed 41. Jason Searle took three for 15 in ten overs in the Islanders' second innings. □ Javagal Srinath, 26, the India Test bowler, has signed a one-season contract to play for Gloucestershire this summer.

Nelson rejoins Bears

BASKETBALL: Steve Nelson, the 6ft 5in England forward, has joined Worthing Bears, his former club, after being released by Thames Valley Tigers. He leaves the league champions only a fortnight after their coach, Mick Bett, praised him for playing well out of position at point guard. Since then, however, Nelson's court time has been limited and he contributed only four points to the Tigers' triumph over Sheffield Sharks in the 7-Up Trophy final. Ian McKinney has joined the Sharks from Derby Bucks.

SNOW REPORTS

	Depth (cm)	Conditions Piste	Runs to resort	Weather (°C)	Last snow
ANDORRA Soldeu	50 90	good powder	good	sun	-5 18/1
(Excellent skiing with fresh powder on a good base)					
AUSTRIA Kitzbühel	70 100	good powder	good	cloud	2 19/1
(15cm of fresh snow on hard base, good skiing)					
Mayrhofen	40	good	varied	fair	-1 19/1
(10cm fresh snow, generally good skiing)					
FRANCE Alpe d'Huez	65 230	good powder	good	fine	-6 19/1
Superb powder skiing, great conditions					
Avoriaz	110 170	good	good	fine	1 18/1
Excellent fresh powder giving superb conditions					
Courchevel	100 200	good powder	good	sun	6 19/1
30cm fresh powder, great skiing, avalanche danger					
Mégève	85 170	good	good	fine	1 18/1
Superb skiing, powder on a good base, no queues					
Val d'Isère	90 220	good powder	good	sun	9 18/1
Wonderful powder skiing throughout Espace Killy					
ITALY Cervinia	80 250	good	varied	good	fine 2 18/1
Excellent skiing on all pistes, powder available					
SWITZERLAND C Montan	205 250	good	varied	good	fine 8 18/1
Very good skiing, colder and some fresh snow					
Mosers	80	good	good	fine	2 19/1
Light powder on all pistes, all lifts open					
Zermatt	75 255	powder	powder	good	fine 5 18/1
Perfect skiing conditions, great powder all day					

Source: Ski Club of Great Britain. L - lower slopes; U - upper; art - artificial.

Graham remains calm as pressure grows at Arsenal

By RUSSELL KEMPSON

THIRTEEN days ago, George Graham carefully considered the implications of Arsenal's drab 0-0 draw with Millwall in the FA Cup third round and, glimpsing a chink of light, he seized on it. "Let me throw some statistics at you," he said to the assembled media wolves. "Of ten cup-ties this season, we have won seven and drawn three, so let's be positive." Backed by an overall cup record of only two defeats in 44 ties, home and abroad, spanning 2½ years, it was difficult to argue.

Today, the update on Graham's post-match number crunching from the New Den is less impressive. Last week, Arsenal bowed out of the Coca-Cola Cup quarter-finals, losing 1-0 against Liverpool at Anfield. On Wednesday, they were humbled 2-0 by Millwall in their FA Cup replay at Highbury. Dour displays, with not even an Ian Wright goal to savour, and Graham's defiant boast had been reduced to playing 12, won 7, drawn 3, lost 2.

On the surface, Graham, 50, remains unruffled. Crises come and go, but never, since he succeeded Don Howe in May 1986, has he faced a predicament of such immediate and wide-ranging proportions. "I won't crack," Graham said amid the FA Cup debris at Highbury on Wednesday. "I'm a hard working lad and I believe in fate. Perhaps all this has been sent to test me. But me resign? I think some people are in danger of getting carried away, aren't they?"

His reference to "all this" goes much deeper than only two league wins from 13 outings, almost three months

FOURTH ROUND

JAN 28: *Burnley v Liverpool, Coventry City v Norwich City, Leeds United v Oldham Athletic, Luton Town v Southampton; *Manchester City v Aston Villa, *Manchester United v West Ham, *Queens Park Rangers v West Ham United; *Wolves v Swindon Town. JAN 29: Bristol City v Everton, Tranmere Rovers v Walsley, *Sunderland v Tottenham Hotspur (BBC 1).

JAN 30: Sheffield Wednesday v Wolverhampton Wanderers (Sky).

* all-ticket matches

without a home victory in the Premiership, a squad that contains too many thirty-somethings for comfort and the fact that Graham, beset by injuries and suspensions, has used 30 players in the Premiership this season, more than any other club. The red-and-white malaise has stained Highbury off the pitch, too.

Graham is the main figure of a far-reaching FA Premier League inquiry into allegations of financial irregularities involving players moving from Scandinavia to England.

Birmingham finally completed the signing of the striker Lee Chapman from West Ham United in a £70,000 deal. Chapman, 35, will join Ipswich after a brief spell on loan at Southend.

Doubts had been raised about the move because of a release clause in the three-year contract should the player fail to settle at Elland Road, which would allow him to leave after a year. Ipswich will today complete

Yeboah gets permission to play



Chapman: Ipswich move

ANTHONY YEBOAH completed his £3.4 million transfer from Eintracht Frankfurt to Leeds United yesterday when he was granted a work permit by the Department of Employment. Leeds have been trying for a fortnight to obtain a permit for Ghana football international striker.

Doubts had been raised about the move because of a release clause in the three-year contract should the player fail to settle at Elland Road, which would allow him to leave after a year. Ipswich will today complete

Chapple ponders future at Woking

Non-League Football

by WALTER GAMMIE

WOKING began the defence of the Umbro FA Trophy by taking on Chesham United, of the Diadora League, at Kingfield with the distraction of knowing that Geoff Chapple, their manager, has been approached by Aldershot Town in their search for a replacement for Steve Wignall. Aldershot have set a strict timetable. They say they have had 47 applications, which they will cut to six next Tuesday, then three next Thursday, before announcing the new man in charge a week today.

Chapple said: "I don't want to leave Woking. Ten years is a long time. We've achieved a lot and I think there is much we can still do." He, however, admits his frustration at the lack of progress at finding Woking the new ground that they need to fulfil ambitions of reaching the Football League. "We've been talking about it for three

years and don't seem to be any further forward," Chapple said. He will be lending a particularly keen ear to the results of a meeting between the council and club scheduled for next Tuesday. "People ask me do I really want to drop back into the Diadora League," he said. "Sometimes you might have to take two steps back to go two steps forward."

Chesham are having a season of retrenchment after the end of the high-profile regime of the Aplin brothers that brought them the Diadora title in 1992-93. Under the chairmanship of David Pembroke, a local property developer, Bob Pearson, formerly the managing director at Slough Town, has rebuilt the team in partnership with the player-manager, Paul Roberts, the former Millwall and Colchester player.

Chesham City, of the Beazer Homes League premier division, take on Yeovil Town in a tie that represents a chance for another show of strength from their supporters. A crowd of 2,367 for the FA

Cup fourth qualifying round tie against VS Rugby, which clinched a first round trip to Wycombe Wanderers, brought reminders of heady days of 1973, when nearly 16,000 people watched a Cup-tie against Ipswich Town.

The capacity was then 18,000. It is now 2,850 as safety considerations have sliced the number allowed in an ageing stadium, which the club may be occupying on borrowed time as it is now owned by a property company from which it has a one-year lease.

Clarke, the secretary, said: "Chesham 1980 was in the hands of the liquidators and the club would have gone under if a group of supporters hadn't got together to keep it alive." The new committee had to meet a debt to Harwich and Parkstone, which had brought a sine die ban from the FA, and place a £15,000 bond with the Beazer Homes League before being allowed to continue playing. "We still have to secure the club's future," Clarke said. "It may mean relocation."

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Take a bungee jump with the gas-guzzlers

In a car park in Detroit stands an official warning sign: "Owners of Foreign Cars Not Welcome." The penalty for disobedience is not specified, but the tone is plain: anyone sporting an "I Heart My Honda Civic" sticker in this proud former capital of the American car industry must expect tar and feathers at the very least.

No matter that the car park was empty anyway, Jeremy Clarkson's Motorworld (BBC 2) discovered last night in Detroit a city for which the Cadillac fin and horn were the long-gone twin peaks; and for which violence and inner-city desolation is the current reality. Nobody's dancing in the street, these days, not even Martha and the Vandellas. Former auto workers drink in poolhalls and crack joints. From motor capital of America, this city has become murder capital of the world. At night, when cars hot-rod illegally down Main Street, it's reminiscent

of *The Cars That Ate Paris*. All of which was handy for Clarkson, a trustworthy chap in jeans and open-necked shirt, whose enthusiasm for cars seems tempered by a refreshing awareness that automobiles are only pieces of moulded tin, set on wheels and started up. Clarkson readily adores Detroit, and in particular loves being rude about the big, fuel-guzzling American cars which contributed to the industry's collapse. At the wheel of a geometrically squared-off, immensely long "town car" he demonstrated its ridiculous suspension by accelerating, then slamming to a stop, strutting at the camera as the car bounced and veered as if it had just made a bungee jump.

The good news was that the American car industry is picking up, though not in the centre of Detroit, despite the Mayor's intriguing point that the city had only been Murder Capital of the

World once. Happily, Clarkson drove some new American success stories, though never letting his critical faculties slip: the new Ford Mustang he dubbed "all mouth and no trousers", which just goes to show that no corner of factual programmes is now immune from clever-dicks. It would be good to see the sceptical Clarkson really let his hair down, but I suspect he may need a few pints inside him. Given all the precision driving required, this may be awkward.

At last I have caught up with the *Files* (BBC 2), and can understand why its cult following has grown up. Here is a formula that can't fail. An FBI agent (Mulder, played by David Duchovny) has all the resources to investigate supernatural, twilight-zone occurrences — those occurrences that the real-life FBI famously suppresses. But Agent



Lynne Truss

Cooper in *Twin Peaks*, Mulder is a man with a mind as wide open as a French door, whose personal credo is that "the truth is out there", so whoopee, he's a space cadet with the power of arrest. Far from hatching wicked cover-ups and conspiracies, he is positively amazed that conspiracies and cover-ups exist. What else? Yes, he is drop-dead gorgeous, which helps. Plus his assistant Dana is in love

with him, but tragically never says. On the other hand, I still have no idea why anyone watches 99-1 (ITV), in which Leslie Grantham grumps and stares his way through a similar web of intrigue, complications and paranoia, and all without once pausing for essential acting lessons. Last night's intricate plot involved a mad, sadistic, Falklands veteran and arms dealer (Michael Jayston, making free with a riding crop), and a consignment of "auto parts" which were really Kalashnikovs, and Raynor infiltrated the villains by a ploy so cunning that it was as though it never happened (it didn't). He just was offered a job by the madman, said "All right, Mister Madman, what would you like me to do?" and thereafter operated from the inside. Grantham's personal best moment was assuming his disguised, Dirty-Den curly-

lip thing, when shown the black severed ears of vanquished Argentinians (war trophies). However, disgusted and glassy is Grantham's natural expression; dramatically speaking, it comes in handy quite rarely.

Hum. Back on BBC 2, *Situation Vacant* took us aboard the cruise liner *Canberra*, where four nice-looking people called Claire, Julia, Stuart and Kenneth competed for the job of Entertainments Officer (ie. Red Coat). Unsurprisingly, Julia dropped out of the running when she said she couldn't stick the passengers "moaning" all the time. When they "moaned" about their chicken à la king, for instance, she felt like pointing out there were people starving in the world, which is not the line an all-smiling entertainments officer is supposed to take. (NB: Why do the passengers "moan" all the time? Should the

Canberra perhaps take note? Anyway, Claire said that personally she could listen to the "moaning" without letting it bother her. Claire got the job.

Each week there is one winner and three brave, crushed losers. *Situation Vacant* is like *Gladiators* without the Lycra — big talk followed by ritual humiliation, then plucky acceptance. The disappointed never yell "It's a pity job this way!" (which was certainly true this week). Instead, they tend to mumble something insincere about a learning experience. Anyway, last night's highlighted loser was Kenneth, who had furore till dawn in deck lounges, poor love, yet seemingly got zero reward. Just before the credits, however, we were told that he subsequently got a job on the *Canberra* and is now an entertainments officer on a world cruise! He got the pity job after all! The news filled one's heart with joy.

REVIEW



Valentine Peliss and Joanna Roth (BBC1, 9.30pm)

Screen One: The Plant (BBC1, 9.30pm)
Writer-director Jonathan Lewis has concocted one of those disconcerting dramas that start serenely enough and then abruptly take a dark and disturbing turn. A television company is at work in a well-heeled suburban street, the location for a popular gardening programme. The sun shines from a cloudless sky and everybody is happy, not least the handsome, robust, and charmingly misanthropic, who enjoys a tastefully photographed affair with one of the residents. Then a spade hits something gruesome, the police move in and the placid neighbourhood is thrown into turmoil. Even a miniature garden railway is pulled into a cleverly worked mystery which Lewis keeps nicely bubbling until ready to reveal his ingenious solution.

The 3,000 Mile Garden (Channel 4, 8.00pm)
In an echo of *84 Charing Cross Road*, Roger Phillips and Leslie Land correspond from opposite sides of the Atlantic. The difference is that the subject is horticulture, not books. Phillips is a gardener and cook who lives in London. Land earns her living as a gardening and food writer, based in Maine. They meet at a conference on mushrooms and their letters have been crossing the water ever since. The television version of this interchange opens in January and finds Phillips cooking a ham in a leaf heap (the temperature is 140 degrees Fahrenheit) while Land checks over storm damage in a snowy New England. As with *84 Charing Cross Road* an improbable formula provides justifying entertainment.

Countrywomen: The Dragonmaster (BBC2, 8.00pm)
Tonight's gaeleacher into a male world is Lynn Woodward. She is a ghillie, but if this conjures up visions of a Scottish manservant she is certainly not that. Her workplace is a fishery on the River Wye and her job is to look after the fishermen, talking them out of tipping boats, advising them where the fish are and what bait to use. She calls all her customers "sir" or "madam" and says the formality makes it easier to tick them off. Since many of them are people with more money than sense or knowledge, scolding is part of the routine. Woodward runs a bookshop, though you never see her selling any books. She is thirtyish, a bit plump, rolls her eyes and has a dazzling smile. In this episode she makes a pass at her dentist but immediately regrets it. Perhaps the idea is that she is destined to remain unmarried, though this seems to be more by accident than design. Her obvious attraction for the feminist cause, while she tries to avoid male attachments, her room mate pursues girls like there is no tomorrow. But he cannot decide whether he wants to keep them. It is very puzzling. Peter Waymark

Ellen (Channel 4, 9.00pm)
The American comedy returns for a second series but if you were asked to pinpoint its rationale that would be difficult. The heroine, engagingly played by Ellen DeGeneres, runs a bookshop, though you never see her selling any books. She is thirtyish, a bit plump, rolls her eyes and has a dazzling smile. In this episode she makes a pass at her dentist but immediately regrets it. Perhaps the idea is that she is destined to remain unmarried, though this seems to be more by accident than design. Her obvious attraction for the feminist cause, while she tries to avoid male attachments, her room mate pursues girls like there is no tomorrow. But he cannot decide whether he wants to keep them. It is very puzzling. Peter Waymark

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Audience warms to American after Bates wilts in the heat

Service as usual for showman Agassi

FROM STUART JONES, TENNIS CORRESPONDENT IN MELBOURNE

ONLY one competitor was evidently having fun at the Australian Open yesterday. Andre Agassi, the showman playing up to a new tennis audience, turned the second match of his first appearance in the tournament into an amusing exhibition. He was lucky, though. He was playing in the relative cool of the night.

In the fierce heat of the day, during which the temperature was measured at more than 90°F in the shade, a couple of seeds and Britain's lone survivor wilted. Even those who did reach the third round talked of discomfort as they recovered from their ordeals.

Agassi was spared. The main attraction brought in to fill the centre court at Flinders Park, he indulged in charming a crowd of about 12,000, the largest for an evening session, once he had made sure that he

took the breath away by running in towards Golmard's service, thrashing it low over the net and completing the audacious point with an outrageously oblique drop shot, nonchalantly applied with vicious spin. He won more admirers as well as a place in the next round.

The light-hearted touches are doubtless about to be forfeited. Both of his victims have been qualifiers, albeit ruthlessly dismissed for the loss of just 14 games. From here, the opposition will be sterner, starting with Greg Rusedski, the big-serving Canadian who was on the verge of breaking into the top 40 last year.

Ahead lies the prospect of the marketing men's dream. In the last 16, Agassi could face Australia's golden boy, Patrick Rafter, one of only two home representatives left in the championship. The other, Mark Woodforde, was so grateful for the vocal backing on Wednesday that he gave Aus\$50 to his supporters.

His compatriot needs to offer no bribes, though he did donate three sweat-bands after he had beaten another qualifier, Steve Campbell, 6-4, 7-6, 6-2. Rafter expressed relief, especially at serving four successive aces to conclude the tie-break. "It was so hot out there," Rafter, 21, from Queensland, said, "that I was trying to pace myself."

He will next be involved in a preview of the Davis Cup tie in South Africa. He plays Marcos Ondruska, who knocked out the sixteenth seed, Richard Krajicek, in straight sets. The other seed to fall was Wayne Ferreira, the No. 11, who was credited with an inordinately high number of 100 unforced errors, the beneficiary, Aaron Krickstein, conceding that the conditions had played a part. "It has been hotter in the past here but we



Bates suffers in the heat of Melbourne on his way to defeat in the second round of the Australian Open

were fortunate to start at ten o'clock in the morning," he said.

Jeremy Bates had the misfortune to be sent out in the noonday sun with Patrick McEnroe. "It was a killer in the beginning," the Britain No. 1 said. In the end he accepted responsibility for his failure to overcome the con-

queror of Boris Becker, the third seed, in the opening round.

Of the 20 break points that Bates fashioned, he missed all but three to go out 6-3, 7-5, 6-3. "I couldn't capitalise on the chances I had," he lamented after toiling for two hours and 20 minutes.

The quality was even lower

on court No. 11, where Petr Korda recovered from an early warning for time-wasting and a two-set deficit. "I felt as though I was playing in an oven," he said after sharing a total of 192 unforced errors with Lars Burgsmuller, yet another qualifier.

Todd Martin, the eighth seed, suffered from a nose-

bleed midway through his victory over Jean-Philippe Fleurian, and Stefan Edberg, the sixth seed, continued to suffer from eager youngsters. For the second time he was extended by "a young and hungry" opponent, Adrian Panaitescu, from Romania, but at least his 29th birthday celebrations were not spoiled.

Loss of Proctor causes new headache for weary Wales

By DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

IT NEVER rains but it pours for Wales. Already deprived by injury of five senior players, rugby union's five nations champions yesterday lost a sixth, Wayne Proctor, before departing for the opening round of the 1995 championship, against France in Paris tomorrow.

Proctor, 22, of Llanelli, who has been playing some of the most assured rugby of his career this season, had apparently recovered from influenza only to go down with a chest infection that required a visit to hospital in Cardiff for blood tests. His place on the wing goes to Simon Hill, of Cardiff, who played against South Africa in November and now wins his seventh cap.

Wales, already without Iwan Evans, Mike Rayer and Nigel Davies in their potential back division and Emyr Lewis and Hemi Taylor in the forwards, clearly sought as much experience as possible rather than offering a first cap to the Wales A wing, David Manley. Hill, 26, played in the victory over France last season though it will be his first visit to the Parc des Princes.

"It's another problem we could have done without, but Simon knows what is required of him at this level," Alan Davies, the Wales coach, said after his squad trained in heavy rain at the Leckwith Stadium in Cardiff. The chances of Wales playing a broad game in Paris are, in any case, comparatively limited, and bad weather could determine the nature of the game both there and in Dublin, where Ireland, who play England, trained yesterday in extremely wet conditions.

England left London after their closed session at Roehampton with the words of two senior players echoing in their ears: both Rob Andrew (61 caps) and Dean Richards (38) have told team meetings this week that they believe the game at Lansdowne Road will be their hardest of the championship.

This is harsh experience speaking, not merely opinion established as a result of defeats in Dublin and Twickenham over the past two years. Andrew has played the Irish ten times, five times at Lansdowne Road, and each of

his older colleagues shares his opinion. "We hope we have learned the lessons of the last two years," Will Carling, the captain, said.

Carling refers to the "distractions" of the last two meetings: in 1993, to the earlier loss in the championship to Wales and the forthcoming British Isles tour; last year, to the expectation of the advantage that playing at Twickenham might have brought and a failure to solve the problems apparent in the narrow win over Scotland.

"This year," he said, "we have a number of options, but players have to do the basics well. This time, we may be going over there as underdogs. We have heard they are confident and, looking at the bare facts, maybe they should be."

FIVE NATIONS



CHAMPIONSHIP

Cards on trial 40

Jones back in control 40

Five of the England team have yet to play an international in Dublin and will have to become accustomed to the "wall of sound" that Jack Rowell, their manager, ascribes to the ground. "The Irish have a well-balanced team, two wings who are a threat and Brendan Mullin back in the frame," Rowell said. "Their forwards will get wound up and, if we give them things that encourage them, the crowd will get behind them and they will become supermen."

Mark Ring, the centre or stand-off half capped 32 times by Wales between 1983 and 1991, has been dismissed by Pontypool. "The interests of parties would be best served by a severance of Ring's connections with the club," a statement by Pontypool said.

Nash's Middlesex career may go up in smoke

Three New Zealand cricketers — Stephen Fleming, the batsman, and Dion Nash and Matthew Hart, the all-rounders — have been dropped for the three-match one-day international series against West Indies after being fined for using cannabis during the recent tour of South Africa.

Nash, who sprang to prominence in England last summer with 11 wickets and a half-century in the Lord's Test match, is scheduled to join Middlesex as their overseas player for the coming season as a replacement for Desmond Haynes.

Joe Hardstaff, the Middlesex secretary, interviewed on BBC Radio's *Five Live*, said: "I applaud the action they have taken because drug-taking has no place in our game."

The New Zealand cricket authorities said Nash deserved to be given a second chance with Middlesex. "That is probably a good guess," Hardstaff said, "but we will consider Dion's position when we have all the facts."

After the three players were each fined NZ\$250 (about £100), Nash said he had "merely simulated" using cannabis at a private party. Fleming and Hart admitted smoking the drug.

Fleming said: "I deeply regret my involvement in the incident that has led to my suspension and for bringing shame and embarrassment on the game of cricket in New Zealand. I am very aware of my responsibility as a role model for young people. This has been a

Michael Munro reports on a drugs scandal in New Zealand cricket

painful lesson for me. I hope it will serve as a useful lesson for other young people."

The suspensions were imposed after an inquiry into the team's performance on the tour to South Africa, from which it returned 12 days ago. Geoff Howarth, the coach, resigned two days ago amid uproar over poor results and reports of lack of discipline off the field. Mike Sandlant, the team manager, had stepped down a week earlier.

Howarth, the former Surrey play-

er and New Zealand captain, looks to have borne the brunt of the dissatisfaction with a record that has seen New Zealand lose their past 12 one-day internationals and go down to a 2-1 defeat in the series against South Africa after winning the first Test match. Howarth has been replaced by John Reid, the former Test batsman — no relation to the New Zealand captain of 30 years ago.

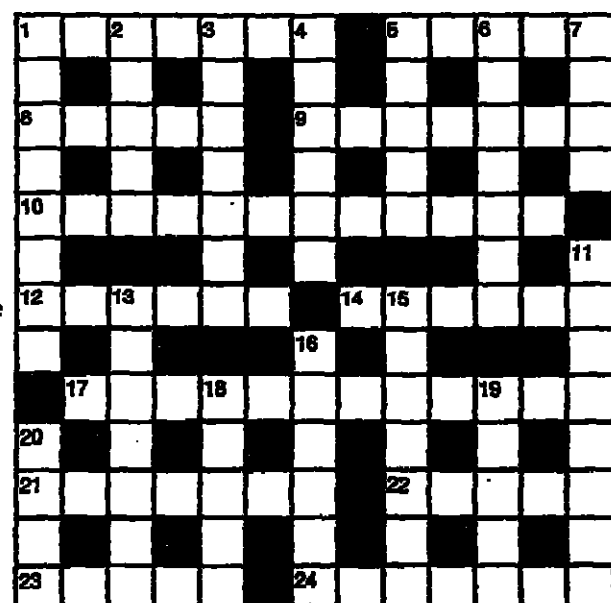
John Morrison, the former Test batsman who is now a television commentator, attacked an "unhealthy star culture" in the team. Some less experienced players seemed to think they had joined the rich and famous and had forgotten what they were in the team for, he said.

Sir Richard Hadlee, the former Nottinghamshire and New Zealand all-rounder, said the credibility of New Zealand cricket was now "very much on the line".

New Zealand Cricket, the sports governing body, is celebrating its centenary and the arrival of West Indies for the one-day internationals and two Test matches heralds two busy months in which South Africa, Australia, India and Sri Lanka will also join the celebrations.

Justin Vaughan, Dipak Patel and Royden Hayes have been called up for the suspended players for the first one-day match against West Indies in Auckland on Sunday.

John Woodcock, page 38
South Africa fight back, page 38



TIMES TWO CROSSWORD

No 374

ACROSS

- 1 Bitter, sour (7)
- 5 Information channels (5)
- 8 Foreign(er) (5)
- 9 Course of diet therapy (7)
- 10 Look round as tourist (3,3,6)
- 12 Servant's uniform (6)
- 14 Of uneven quality, coverage (6)
- 17 Unseen listener (3,2,3,4)
- 21 Normal course of duties (7)
- 22 To taste; unscripted remark (2,3)
- 23 Small reflected shaft of light (5)
- 24 Lockjaw (7)

DOWN

- 1 Water (joc.) (5,3)
- 2 Banishment (5)
- 3 Inn of Court governor (7)
- 4 Clear, light red (6)
- 5 Gog's fellow-giant (5)
- 6 Popular, spoken Greek (7)
- 7 Last Stuart monarch (4)
- 11 Prescribed content of study course (8)
- 13 Carrion bird; one preying on the weak (7)
- 15 Temporarily suspended (7)
- 16 Formally witness (to) (6)
- 18 Poppy drug (5)
- 19 Exhausted; inclusive (3,2)
- 20 Two-master; northern bridge (4)

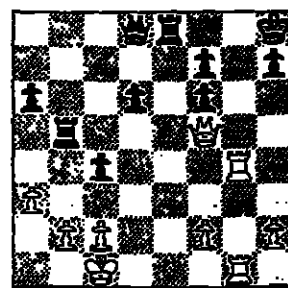
SOLUTION TO NO 373

- ACROSS: 1 Massage 5 Mused 8 Split 9 Pertain 10 Insomnia 11 Idly 13 Good and proper 16 Lett 17 Octuplet 20 Premier 21 India 22 Proof 23 Surfeit
- DOWN: 1 Missing 2 Silas 3 Autumnal 4 Esprit de corps 5 Mars 6 Stand up 7 Dandy 12 Croupier 14 On the go 15 Retreat 16 Lap up 18 Ladle 19 Riff

WINNING MOVE

By Raymond Keene

This position is from the game Nunn - Pritchett, Bundesliga 1985. White has broken through on the kingside. How does he deliver the coup with a checkmating combination?



Solution, page 40
Raymond Keene, page 6

WORD-WATCHING

By Philip Howard

PALUDAL

- a. Marshy
- b. Playing games
- c. Prehistoric

QUEBRADA

- a. A leather armband
- b. An inn
- c. A mountain stream

RINGOCANDY

- a. A sort of sweet
- b. Malaysian arboreal primate
- c. Flattery

PA'ANGA

- a. A jungle knife
- b. Tongan money
- c. A heart attack

Answers on page 40

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